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VOLUME 1, ISSUE 7

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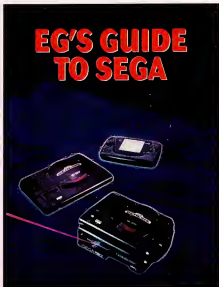




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About the art—We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

Bob Foreman — Cover
Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography
Chris Spohn — EG Interview
Don Wiskind — SNES CD System and Compact Discs — Please note that this is an artist's rendition of what the SNES CD may look like.

We at EG would like to gauge how many people out there bother to read this page. If you are one of the lucky ones who care enough to read every word of our humble magazine you too may be a winner. Just send your name, address, and telephone number to any of the addresses you may find in the book. A total of \$30,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded! Either that or this is just an elaborate April Fools joke. You may never know.

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Screens shown are from the SNES version of the game.

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POWER ON!

3DO: Sizzle or Substance?

The rumors filtered into my office for a year. "Check out the San Mateo Software Group," said an informant. Information proved spotty and scarce. All I could learn was the rumors of a new CD-based system, involving Electronic Arts.

Months passed. I unearthed a few more tantalizing hints, but not many. "They're calling it 'Opera'," my informant told me. I begged for details, but he wouldn't sing.

Gaming's deepest secret went semi-public last fall. The 3DO Developers Conference electrified the industry and made 3DO the hot topic at the November Comdex.

The wraps came all the way off at the Consumer Electronics Show at a special press conference. They've got hardware, a sophisticated marketing plan, and about 80 software companies lined up to make products (see the March issue of *EQ* for details). The burning question: Will 3DO become a home entertainment center fixture, or will it be one more stillborn "great idea?"

The technological superiority of 3DO is impressive. Unfortunately, that doesn't guarantee success. Beta video and the Sega Master system are two examples of gear that didn't dominate despite a technological edge. And if the public doesn't want the gizmo that advantage becomes a moot point.

The 3DO marketing plan is visionary. It's an orderly progression that could take 3DO to the 21st Century. No system has had such a detailed and imaginative blueprint. Yet like any plan, this one depends on the validity of its assumptions. The key one is that enough people will pay \$700 for the basic system, plus hundreds for various add-ons. Some treasure maps lead to riches; others trace a route to nowhere. We won't really know which interpretation is right until consumers cast their vote at the cash register.

I'm highly impressed by the roster of 3DO software developers. All the biggies want to get into this game, and good software sells the hardware. However, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. First generation software for new systems sometimes utilizes only a fraction of the unit's capabilities. Will the first wave of 3DO multimedia disks turn on gamers, or send them scurrying toward alternatives? That is another question that won't be decided until the end of the year.

Personally, I'm betting on Trip Hawkins and the high spirited band of industry legends. After seeing the demonstrations and talking with developers actually working on projects, I am convinced that 3DO could be the right machine at the right time.

For one thing, it's an appliance. Ease of operation and superb quality output are what consumers want, and 3DO can deliver. A black box is much more likely to attract a mass audience than a PC-type set-up that requires the user to learn a lot about the device in order to make it do anything.

A \$700 console and \$50-a-pop software is steep, but consumers will be seeing and hearing games beyond anything currently available in the home market. Ironically, one of 3DO's problems will be to overcome consumer skepticism about upgradability and expandability caused by the unredeemed promises made for earlier entries. That's where the company's comprehensive plans should help enormously.

The involvement of Electronic Arts and the leadership of 3DO President Trip Hawkins is another positive factor. Other systems have suffered from lack of entertainment software. That can be a fatal shortage, since entertainment is the most powerful inducement for people to blow the budget on a new system. It crippled CDTV and has hurt CDI, but 3DO won't repeat this mistake.

It will come down to software. The first 3DO games may not be the ultimate, but they'll look and sound better than anything else. That's inherent in the hardware. It's premature to hand out the crown, but electronic gaming may have a new king.

— Arnie Katz

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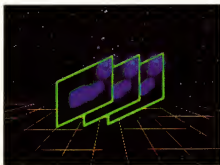
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FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

What's in a Namco?

Whoopie! You've printed my name twice now in Fandom Central. If only you'd mentioned my occasional articles for *The 2600 Connection*, which you reviewed in EG#1, I'd be 3 for 3.

In Bill Kunkel's review of *Galaga '91* in Portable Playtime, he makes one error. *Galaga* was a sequel to Namco's earlier *Galaxian*, but it was Taito that produced *Space Invaders*, not Namco.

Russ Perry
Omro, WI

You're right. In fact, *Space Invaders* was such a success that it probably rescued Taito, whose *Pachinko* games, the Japanese equivalent of pinball, were beginning to lose favor. Namco, meanwhile, went on to win enormous success with *Pac-Man*.

It's All in the Viewpoint

Why all the negative hype surrounding new multimedia systems? With the release of the TurboDuo and Sega CD, compact disc interactive games are becoming more and more prominent. With the ability of compact discs to store more information than any cartridge ever could, and less expensive than ROM storage mediums, how can there be any doubt that these little donuts are the wave of the future?

In volume 1, issue 3, in *Hotline*, you mentioned Malibu Comics and two comics, *Youngblood* and *Spawn*. Doesn't Image own the rights to these comics, not Malibu?

Kyle "ACE" Lord
Freeland, MI

You don't see much negative hype about CDs here, do you, Ace? EG calls 'em as it sees 'em, and some waves don't always get that much-sought curl; but after the shake-out, CDs will bring us entertainment we can only dream about at the present.

Image Comics, although once distributed by Malibu, is now a completely independent company.

From the Japanese

In response to Marc Camron's East Meets West article, my opinion is that both domestic and overseas versions of video games should be absolutely identical. Gamers who buy the American version shouldn't have to settle for what they can get (outside of mail order importers), and may feel short-changed if they see the Japanese version of a game they already own. Graphics aren't the only thing affected: check out the 45 sound effects in the Japanese version of *Strider* for the Genesis. The American version only has 37. If there have to be changes or removal of graphics in porting a game over from Japan, there should be reductions in the price. Apart from text translation, what harm is there in fully retaining a game's visuals? Even my five-year-old nephew knows these games aren't real!

Ricky Johnson

Ohswecken, Ont., Canada

We agree that probably no harm would be done, but the companies who market these games in the U.S. are very sensitive to any negative reaction from parents and consumer groups, whose complaints can be legion. Mail order does remain an option, for those willing to pay extra (and get the adaptors).

I.D.'s That Driving Game

The Game Doctor's column dug up a few memories. Sean Wilkinson asked for the names of two arcade games. His first description was of a *Defender*-style game with 360-degree movement and firing thanks to a paddle control. This reminds me of Exidy's *Victory*, a *Defender* clone with Exidy's washed-out looking color graphics and a complicated control system. It was one of a number of cartridges announced for ColecoVision that were never released (other unreleased Exidy games were *Spectar*—the sequel to *Targ*—and *Rip Cord*).

As for the racing game, I remember it mostly for its appearance in George Romero's classic zombie film, *Dawn of*

the Dead. The game is called *F-1* and its manufacturers are Namco and Atari. It's not strictly a video game, as the car the player controls is a transparent plastic icon mounted on a metal rod that's connected physically to a steering wheel (like the top-down race game the Doc mentioned). The perspective is a kind of distorted head-on view, and the explosion is spectacular, fiery, and nerve-rattling. The game was really frustrating, too; some of the enemy cars streaked right through you while others barely had to get close and you blew up.

As a member of NAEGE, I want to thank EG for its support of the first national fan organization.

Edward Karpp
San Diego, CA

Always, Edward...and thanks for the further info on those two games!

Translation, Please

I'd like to address one real gripe I have with the video game manufacturing community on the subject of bad Japanese to English translations. Come on, people! Hire some high school graduates to proofread your text. Stop translating Japanese titles verbatim: *Silent Debuggers*, *Actraiser*, *Musha*, *Gaiares*, etc. I own these games, but I bought them based on game play, not titles. A few talented writers could turn these "what in the world is that?" games into major hits. What would you name an action movie with the content of *Silent Debuggers*? *Adventures of the Space Exterminators*? Sure it's a silly title, but more comprehensible than *Silent Debuggers*, in which the hero is anything but silent.

Lee Bentley
Houston, TX

Maybe good bilingual high school graduates are in short supply? Hey, if that was all it took to make the hits, though...

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EG HOTLINE

Compiled by: Joyce Worley

Support Grows for 3D0

Over 80 companies have already signed on to develop products for 3D0, as the gaming industry grows more excited about the capabilities of the newest

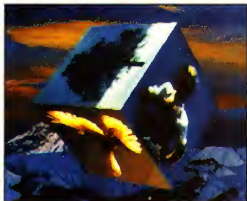


format. Some of the special effects possible are Warping (routines to bend, twist, skew, shrink and stretch images), Transparency (makes solid images clear to reveal background, such as smoke, water, clouds, fog, etc.), Special Lighting Effects (so every character

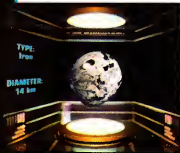
doesn't have to be redrawn when the light source moves or changes color), Anti-aliasing (smooths the edges of bit-mapped graphics), and Texture Mapping

(to wrap an image onto a 3-D shape, such as a face onto a ball).

Other tools available to developers include the 3D0



Content Library, a collection on 170 CD-disks of music, sound effects, film, clip art, and texture effects, with continuing updates as more data is accumulated.



TTI Renames Duo

TTI has renamed the Turbo Duo; it is now called the Duo, and software for the unit is called Duo Soft. The company previewed 44 new games at CES, including cartridges to play on Duo, TG-16, and TurboExpress; CDs for play on the Duo and TG-CD; and Super CDs to play on the Duo or any TG-CD equipped with the Super System Card.

Among the games sched-

uled are well known hits like **Sherlock Holmes II** and **Sim Earth** for Super CD, and a sequel to the VHD shooter **Gate of Thunder**, using many scrolling views.



Gates to Write Police Quest 4

In the type-casting coup of the year, Sierra hired Los Angeles' controversial ex-police chief Daryl Gates to write the next **Police Quest** role-playing adventure.

Said Gates: "I want to give computer users the opportunity to see what it's like to be a cop in LA. I want to show the day-to-day pressures officers face and provide an accurate picture of the dangers and difficulties they encounter in trying to solve a crime."

Fantasy Baseball In Palm-Sized Park

Franklin Digital Book, a portable cartridge-using reader, is set to provide baseball lovers some small diamond thrills. There's already a cartridge called

Big League Baseball, with all the players and stats since baseball began. This summer they'll introduce **All Time Baseball Manager**. Using the two carts in the reader simultaneously, gamers can play stat-based fantasy games drawing from the databank.

Get a Grip with Game Gear Pack

Game Gear players can get a better handle on their games and more power with Naki's Turbo Twins rechargeable battery modules (\$49.95). Two separate units snap into the battery housings of the Sega portable game console to form play-grip handles on

either side. A full charge, using the included AC adapter/charger, allows six hours of play with capacity for about 500 recharges.



First Round Collectibles

Watch for the special limited and numbered collector's editions of **EA Sports** games. The first set of each title has a special sticker on the carton identifying them as "1st Round" products, and include an offer for a free collectible.

First in the series was **NHLPA Hockey '93** for the Genesis, with a free 24" x 36" NHLPA Hockey banner, but more sports games will get this deluxe treatment later this year.

SuperVision has Super Screen

Goldnation is distributing a deluxe portable game unit with a big screen and



stereo sound, called Super-Vision. The new system was made by Hong Kong's Watery Industries and sports a 2.76-inch-square LCD screen and a two-player link. It retails for \$49.95 with one game. A color link option due in August will allow color gaming when connected to a TV.

New games to support the color link include such licensed titles as **Rambo**, **Terminator 1** and the popular **Elite**. The company expects the software titles to grow in number by the end of the year.

Compton Starts CD Rental

Compton's New Media is putting rental copies of CD-ROM titles in over 10,000 video rental stores nationwide, thanks to a distribution agreement with Major Video Concepts. The com-

pany will provide special discs and packaging for the rental market.

The first group of CDs shipped include: **Beauty and the Beast**; **Book of Lists #3**; **Jazz: A Multimedia History**; **Greatest Books Collection**; and **Stories of Murder, Mystery, Terror, Magic and More**.

Thumb Fun

The Sore Thumb Blues have relief in sight, thanks to Duran Marketing International. The company's Power Thumb is a form-fitting latex sheath designed to combat video thumb. The protectors come in red, black, yellow, orange, purple and blue. Sizes are S, M, L or XL, for \$2.99. No guarantee you'll score more, but your playing hand will look sharp with such classy attire.

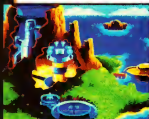
Batman Series Licensed

Batman The Animated Series, the T.V. show that's been wowing comic fans with its atmospheric renderings of the Dark Knight, is coming soon to the small screen.

Konami purchased the license for the gaming rights, and a Game Boy cart based on the cartoon series is expected to appear later this year.

Bond & Pond Fighting Foes

James Bond and James Pond are each scheduled to rid the Genesis of evil: the

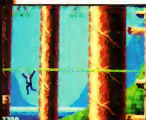


first in a Caribbean adventure, and the latter on the moon.

James Bond 007: The Duel (Tengen) must fight his way

across the island to ultimately confront the boss. The player can expect sharp graphics and incredible action throughout this new title. As Bond, the gamer must fight his way through the supply ship, jungle, volcano and space shuttle to save the world.

Electronic Arts' **James Pond 3** puts the agent on the moon, where an Evil Doctor is trying to steal all the dairy products. (The moon is made of green cheese, remember?) This is a fast action game, with a hundred levels.



James Bond expects to thrill all gamers.

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ON
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ACTION ADVENTURE

FLYING
EDGE

SEGA

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PLAY WITH THE PROS!

EG Readers' Popularity Poll

These are the games readers voted as their favorites in EG's regular poll. Duplicate numbers indicate ties.

Favorite Video Games:

1. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
2. *Sonic 2*, Sega
3. *Sonic the Hedgehog*, Sega

Favorite Computer Games:

1. *Ultima VII*, Origin
2. *Indiana Jones and the*

Fate of Atlantis, LucasArts
3. *Ultima Underworld*, Origin

Favorite Coin-Op Games:

1. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams
3. *Terminator II*, Midway
3. *X-Men*, Konami

Favorite Multimedia Games:

1. *Night Trap*, Sega
2. *Sherlock Holmes*, Icom
2. *Ys Book 1&2*, TTI
2. *Loom*, LucasArts/Software Toolworks
2. *Cobra Command*, Sega

Hansen Is Still Nintendo Champ

It's official: the best Nintendo player in the world is an American. Jeff Hansen successfully defended his title as World Nintendo Champ in a rematch against Yuichi Suyama in a six-minute bout in Las Vegas. Hansen ended the contest, consisting of timed rounds of **Super Mario World**, **F-Zero** and

the skydiving portion of **Pilotwings**, with a total score of 4,672,250 to Suyama's 4,231,560.

Sports announcer Paul E. Dangerously introduced the competitors and wrestler Terry Funk called the match.

Hansen is from Murray, Utah, and Suyama from Tokyo, Japan. The two 12-year olds, both champions from their own countries, had initially competed in Tokyo in September, 1992.

Accolade Co-Sponsors Build a Hole Contest

Jack Nicklaus Productions, *Golf Illustrated* and Accolade are the sponsors of a Hole Design contest for **Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature**

Edition (MS-DOS), to create a perfect par 3, 4 or 5 golf hole using the simulation's architect feature.

Three lucky grand prize winners will play in the Pro-Am event in September at either The Wendy's 3 Tour Challenge in Ohio or The Nationwide Championship in Georgia. In addition, they

and 33 runners-up will get the *Golf Illustrated* Course Disk featuring the creative Grand Prize winning designs. The contest closes on May 31,



Top Coin-Ops: Feb. 1993

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Williams
2. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
3. *Streetfighter II:CE*, Capcom
4. *Terminator 2*, Midway
5. *Golden Axe II*, Sega
6. *Super High Impact*, Midway
7. *Double Axe*, Taito
8. *Sunset Riders*, Konami
9. *Space Gun*, Taito
10. *Turbo Out Run*, Sega

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
2. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
3. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
4. *Mad Dog II*, ALG
5. *Final Lap 2*, Namco
6. *Race Drivin'*, Atari
7. *X-Men*, Konami
8. *Moto Frenzy*, Atari
9. *Four Trax*, Atari
10. *Steel Talons*, Atari

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Time Killers*, Strata
2. *World Heroes*, SNK
3. *Art of Fighting*, SNK
4. *Fatal Fury 2*, SNK
5. *Neck N' Neck*, Bundra
6. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
7. *Aero Fighters*, McO'River
8. *Undercover Cops*, Irem
9. *Raiden*, Faktek
10. *Irem Skins*, Irem

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Addams Family*, Midway
2. *Star Wars*, Data East
3. *Fish Tales*, Williams

4. *Lethal Weapon 3*, Data East
5. *White Water*, Williams
6. *Terminator 2*, Williams
7. *Cue Ball Wizard*, Gott./Prem.
8. *Getaway*, Williams
9. *Black Rose*, Midway
10. *Dr. Who*, Midway

Top PC Games: January 1992

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, DC., based on sales data received from Software Etc., Electronics Boutique, Babbage's and Waldensoftware.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Kings Quest VI*, Sierra
2. *Commander: Maximum Overkill*, Nova Logic
3. *The Humans*, Gametek
4. *Wing Commander*, Origin
5. *Sim City*, Maxis
6. *Star Control II*, Accolade
7. *Wizardry VII: Crusaders Savant*, Sir-Tech
8. *Castles II*, Interplay
9. *Aces of the Pacific*, Sierra
10. *Civilization*, MicroProse

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *Battle Chess*, Interplay
2. *Wing Commander: Sec. Missions 1&2*, Origin
3. *Cinemania*, Microsoft
4. *Sherlock Holmes, Detective*, Icom
5. *CD Game Pack*, Software Toolworks
6. *World View*, Britannica
7. *Kings Quest V*, Sierra
8. *Loom*, Software Toolworks
9. *Where in the World is Carmen ...*, Broderbund
10. *Murders of the Earth*, Warner New Media

SNES Hunts For Carmen Sandiego

Hi Tech Expressions is expanding the search for the notorious Carmen Sandiego by bringing two popular titles in Broderbund's series to the SNES.

First up is an adaptation of **Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?**, the geographical game that launched the continuing pursuit of Carmen and her henchmen.

It will be closely followed by **Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?**

Accolade Signs Brett Hull, Pele

Accolade signed exclusive licensing agreements with two superstars to endorse and help design sports simulations for SNES, Genesis and MS-DOS. Brett Hull, right winger for the St. Louis Blues and son of Hall of Famer Bobby Hull, will work on the hockey game, and



Pelé, formerly with the New York Cosmos and World Cup soccer champion, will lend his name to a new soccer contest.

Free Service On Line

There's free time available to on-line gamers through EG-Net. The Electronic Gaming Network (which has no connection to this magazine) offers 30 minutes per day of free service, and a sample of the entertainments EG-Net has on line.

The new bulletin board service has shareware games to download, a variety of utilities, hints, publications, a message service, news and reviews, plus on-line games to play against other callers. More on-line time is available for \$5, \$10, and \$25 memberships.

To connect, call 401-294-7852 Fri., Sat. or Sun., 7 am - 11:30 pm EST.

Memories of Miner

In the current day of multi-system marketing, when nearly every title comes out in multiple computer and video game versions, it is hard to believe that it wasn't always thus. In fact, in the early days of electronic gaming, each entertainment design was focused only on one hardware system. What appeared on Intellivision never went to Atari. Programs designed for Colecovision couldn't be played on Odyssey. IBM, Apple and Commodore products were equally segregated.

The first cross-system title changed all that. A far-sighted agent, Barry Friedman, realized the potential of licensing games to every available format, and the first program given this broad-scope treatment was **Miner 2049er**, a multi-level

platform game designed by Bill Hogue.

There were over 15 versions published, for everything from the VIC-20 and TRS-80, to the Atari 800 and Panasonic. Big Five did the Atari version, Mike Livesay programmed the Apple version for MicroLab, and Tivision did it for the Atari 2600. After the Miner development, manufacturers realized that cross-system publishing would increase returns from the R&D required to create a high-caliber game.

Now almost any title worth the play is available for every video game and computer system. In fact, the best titles for a certain system are often reproduced with great care and playability when ported to another piece of hardware. It was the success of **Miner 2049er** that made this possible.

Behind the Headlines With Joyce Worley Lower Prices Will Come

Some new products are about to produce that most desirable computing goal: compatibility. ACS's 50/50 Dual Desktop board installs in the MS-DOS machine and allows it to read and write Mac disks. The system displays PC DOS on the left side of the screen, the Mac operating system on the right, and the user drags whichever screen is desired to the forefront. The manufacturer expects to introduce a similar product to let Macintosh computers play MS-DOS disks later this year.

Microsoft is said to be working on a new version of Windows that completely does away with the DOS shell, so users will never again have to type commands to open files.

Compatibility and ease of use are just what's needed to expand the audience for games. This means that developers will have fewer worries about which system to create games for. The probable result is lower prices.



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PLAY WITH THE PROS!



INSERT COIN HERE

Going Full Circle

by Jay Carter

The coin-operated amusement machine business is like many other industries. There are design trends that not only embrace true evolutionary breakthroughs, but also derivatives of what have proven to be successful for the mass audience of game players. This fact has probably never been most evident in recent times than when we look at what is currently being released, as well as rumors of upcoming games that are trading off on familiar themes or intrinsic play action.

First off, as the spring season begins to unfold, some of the highlights to be on the lookout for include the introduction of an all new **Battletoads** coin-op adventure from Leland, **Street Fighter II** finding a transitional home as a Gottlieb pin-ball machine from Premier Technology, and a four-player wrestling extravaganza called **Wrestle Slam Master** from Capcom.

For now, there is an ample array of games coming your way that should more than hold their own against the reigning favorites and even build up their own loyal following of players.

Heading the list is Strata's **Time Killers** which features not only your standard fare of mutilation and bleeding, but also decapitation. As if inspired by a scene from Monty Python's *Holy Grail*, this two-player, head-to-head action fighting game incorporates the familiar premise of advancing up the ladder in a series of battles to become the immortal champion.

There are nine different characters to choose from, with each coming from his

own 'time' in history (hence the name of the game) and wielding his own weaponry. Thugg is an axe-carrying caveman while Leif is a Viking warrior who uses a double-edged battle axe. There's also

Wulf the medieval knight and Musashi, a powerful samurai. Rounding out the eclectic cast are the 21st century punk rocker Rancid who 'plays' the chainsaw; a lone female warrior from the future (armed with a laser saber) named Matrix, and Mantazz, an alien insectoid with claw feet and razor sharp arms.

Controls are via a joystick and five action buttons that correspond to maneuvering the arms, legs and head of your on-screen combatant and, besides some memorable visual action, **Time Killers** takes full advantage of high-resolution 32-Bit graphics, detailed background art, and a new advanced sound system with nine stereo multichannel scores.

From the world of fantasy we move to reality with the appearance of the first major sports association license to ever grace a coin-op video game. Midway has the honors with the introduction of its all new **NBA Jam**. This sports entry has all the qualities of a non-stop highlight film.

Taking the digitized graphics techniques that the company showcased on such efforts as **Terminator 2** and **Mortal**

Kombat and adding in some new scaling and rotation effects, full court roundball action has never been more dazzling in this four-player sports simulation. All 27 of the NBA teams are featured with two of the top stars from each squad comprising your on-screen team for a two-on-two contest.

Originally incorporated in the company's **Super High Impact** football game, **NBA Jam** gives players the opportunity to put in their initials and birthdates in order to retain individual

records, standings and statistics. Controls include a joystick and three action buttons, with one for shooting or





NBA Jam lets the player live out his sports fantasies as a pro hoopsster.

blocking, another for passing or stealing, and the last a special turbo feature that can heighten the action and responsiveness of your chosen athletes whether it's to run faster or leap higher.

Most impressive with **NBA Jam** is not just the articulation of the various star players and their individual signature moves, but the fact that learning specific joystick and action button combinations can result in some of the most outrageous, death-defying slams and jams this side of Madison Square Garden. In addition, you'll enjoy the full motion video sequences of many of the featured players, which only reinforces the experience of taking it to the hoop with the **NBA's** finest.

For those who remember back to the days of **Xevious** and so many of the other vertical scrolling games that have come our way, this is a play action approach that never seems to disappear. And, in some respects, emblematic of the adage that "what goes around comes around," Tecmo is counting on the hope that there's still life to be found with the release of **Final Star Force**.

Back in pre-history, Tecmo had brought out **Star Force** where players had the opportunity to battle in space against the evil legions of Goredess. Obviously, we didn't succeed in finishing off the villain, because now, 2,000 years later (time does fly when you're having fun), we're confronted with the **Return of Goredess** who is, once again, threatening the very survival of humankind.

Over an interplanetary landscape of brightly crafted backdrops and resolute adversaries that reside in this 10-stage scenario, two players can work together, manning their Red Nova and Blue Nova ships, to forever purge the universe of evil. Controls are provided through an eight-way joystick and two fire buttons with the ability to gain a variety of weapon upgrades along the way, including thunderlasers, homing missiles and highly effective mega-bombs.

For those players who still prefer horizontal scrolling game play, fear not because Capcom is ready to challenge your skills with **Warriors of Fate**. A three-player creation, you'll discover yourself in the countryside of Shang-Lo, where violence, treachery and despair are meted out by the dark lord Akkila-Orkhan and his henchmen. Unfortunately for the neighboring countries of Shang-Lo. Fortunately for game players, the evil is spreading and needs to be stopped.

Using a joystick and two action buttons (for jumping and attacking) **Warriors of Fate** provides you with five different characters to select from in your quest to bring peace back to Shang-Lo. There's Abaka, Kassara, Portor, Subutai and Kadan. Each has their own unique weapons and battle skills. By the way, the excellent highly-stylized graphics of the game are the result of the famous cartoon/comic book talents of Hiroshi Motomiya.

Although it might not be the WWF or WCW, Taito has created its own unique wrestling spectacular for up to four players. **Ring Rage** builds upon a well-known premise to serve up some non-stop action and thrills with 32-Bit, digitized quality graphics that bring an interesting

mix of eight different on-screen challenges to life. There's the martial artistry of Deckard, K.O. Joe's kick boxing skills refined on the streets of East LA, Yasha the Ninja Warrior, Australia's Gunboat Rodie or the combined tag team talents of Spike and Knuckle.

Controlling the action, you'll need to master the nuances of a joystick and three buttons (for punching, kicking and jumping), with combination movements of the controls delivering a variety of offensive and defensive skills. Probably the most interesting difference of **Ring Rage** is that it features three different game modes, including a tournament setting where you can advance up the ladder for ultimate victory; a "Mach" mode brings the action to a best two-out-of-three contest, and for those who really want to experience a raging ring, the "Battle Royal" gets everybody into the fray to determine a single winner. In addition, **Ring Rage** provides you with the option of competing in a "street fight" ring or a "cage death match."

Well, it's spring, the weather is getting better, and so is the diversity of coin-op attractions waiting to be discovered by game-playing enthusiasts. Until next time, keep playing and have some fun.

NOW ON GENESIS!

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GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO! BOXING

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GAME DOCTOR

A Cavalcade of Questions

First of all, I must compliment the multitude of talented artists out there who have contributed decorated envelopes and drawings of my humble self both to **EG** and through my column in **Electronic Gaming Monthly**. I hope to start printing some of the best submissions within the next two months, so be prepared.

Now, to the questions...

Q: I'm curious about this SFX chip which Nintendo has announced. Is this going to be like it was with the NES, with the special chips for scrolling, etc., and we gamers wind up paying through the nose?

Why doesn't Nintendo get it right the first time, instead of making all the fixes after the system is released?

Adam Aiello
Stonybrook, NY

A: It is true that Nintendo has a history of making retrofixes to its hardware through the use of software-based upgrade chips. There's also no denying that the SNES has some hardware weaknesses, such as a lack of game speed. When one compares the same game on both the Genesis and the SNES, the Genesis version is invariably faster. The SFX chip is an after-the-fact fix for this and other weaknesses, and it makes its debut on Nintendo's own **Solar Fox**.

There is some question, however, as to how much Nintendo will charge third-party publishers to use the SFX chip. If the price is too high, the non-Nintendo publishers will be forced to charge unrealistically high prices for games that use the chip.

Time will tell on this one, but it does have a sense of *deja vu* about it, doesn't it, Adam?

Q: I was wondering if **Ecco the Dolphin** will come out for the Game Gear?

Dennis O'Brien
Richmond, VA

A: Yup. Everybody's favorite video game dolphin will be swimming over to the Game Gear in the near future. By the way, **Ecco** is already a certified hit, which only goes to show that what the field really needed all this time was a game with a porpoise.

Q: What is "blast processing?" Is it real, or is it something that Sega just invented so they could have their own special features like the SNES has rotation and scaling?

Paul Weber
Mobile, AL

A: Sega swears up and down that blast processing is a real feature and not just something it made up. The term doesn't just refer to the compression technology Sega has been steadily mastering on the Genesis for the past three years, as I also believed. Specifically, blast processing is the feature where you allow a character to build up momentum, then jet them forward at "superSonic" speed, if you will.

Q: What is this Aladdin thing that is supposedly coming from the company that made the Game Genie? Is it real and what does it do?

Dan Giglio
New Hyde Park, NY

A: The product you're thinking of is the **Aladdin Deck Enhancer** from Camerica. Camerica sells the Game Genie in Canada, I believe, while Galoob sells it in the United States. In any case, the ADE was invented by the Darling brothers, the United Kingdom video game wizards who created the Game Genie.

The Deck Enhancer performs a very interesting function: it contains all the specialty functions that Nintendo developed over the years as software-based upgrades (see our first letter) so that the cartridges themselves contain nothing but the ROM code to run the game. As a result, if you own an Aladdin for the NES,

Camerica will sell you high-quality NES cartridge software for about \$20. Of course, Camerica is the only company producing software for the ADE right now, but the games have good graphics and play very well, and they intend to release quite a few titles.

See Ed Dille's **Test Lab** elsewhere this issue for further information on this interesting peripheral.

Q: I am writing to you in response to your request for information on an old arcade game called **UFO**. There was indeed such a machine, although I do not remember who made it. It was shaped roughly like a tube, with a railing around the outside. Inside was a central area with a seat that resembled a bicycle "banana seat." It was attached to something that resembled a submarine periscope. Players would scan the skies through the scope, looking for UFOs and shooting them down, while the player propelled himself sideways 360 degrees about the center of the machine. The last one I saw was in an amusement park that has long since closed. I hope this helps.

I also have a question for you. Does Nintendo plan to produce an adaptor that would allow me to play 8-Bit NES carts on the SNES?

Leonard P. Mulaski
Wilkes-Barre, PA

A: Wow. That coin-op sounds incredible. But now I've got a problem: I've got to have one! Can anyone confirm this description and/or point me in the direction of one?

Sorry, Leonard, but Nintendo steadfastly refuses to produce a NES adaptor for the SNES. After all, the company figures that the only people who would want such a peripheral are those who already own a NES. That being the case, why not simply unplug the RF converter from your SNES, plug it into the NES and play your heart out? Nintendo doesn't seem to realize that American

consumers will often buy adaptors for convenience, and to satisfy themselves that all those NES carts they own won't wind up in the closet along with the NES.

Q: I have a question that's been bothering me for years. Whenever you see a computer monitor in person, there is no noticeable flickering effect. But whenever I see a monitor on TV, it's flickering like crazy. What causes this? Is the monitor really flickering like that when I look at it directly but I just don't see it?

Bill Peterson
Los Angeles, CA

A: No, Bill, the monitor isn't actually flickering like that when you view it directly. What's actually happening is the screen redraw effect is being exaggerated by the television transmission.

In other words, the fact that you're looking at one monitor through another monitor doubles the flicker effect of whatever appears on the original monitor. The higher the resolution of the original monitor, the more pronounced the flickering becomes, because lo-res monitors redraw more frequently than hi-res.

Good question. That's certainly worth a Prize Packet.

Q: Recently I have been looking through old gaming magazines and I have run into ads for several systems I never heard of.

What is an ADAM? What is the difference between the Atari 400, 800, 2600, 5200 and 7800?

John French
Tuba City, AZ

A: Tuba City, eh? Love that name. Okay, John, the ADAM was Coleco's misguided attempt to follow the success of its second-generation programmable video game system, the ColecoVision, with a computer. Needless to say, ADAM never met his Eve.

Now to run down those various Atari systems. The 400 and 800 were computers and the 2600, 5200 and 7800 were video game systems. The 2600 was also known as the Atari VCS (Video Computer System).

The 5200 was an attempt to sell a better quality game system, but it soon flopped and Atari rushed into production on the 7800. This particular system was released just in time to be ground to pieces in the teeth of the mid-80s video game implosion. The 7800 was actually re-released in the wake of Nintendo's revitalization of the video game market several years later.

We have a special treat this issue, from one of the Doc's oldest and most favorite patients, William Simpson, a.k.a. "Whimsical Will." He has created a song for all gaming fanatics. For the musically-inclined, it can be sung to the tune of Theme #16 from **Sonic 2**.

You can play my Sega
if you really beg-a
You can play my Sega
'til I turn it off
You can play Afterburner
or Splatterhouse
ToeJam & Earl and Batman
or Mickey Mouse
Then if you say "please"
I will plug in my Sega CDs
and then
You can play my Sega
if you really beg-a
You can play my Sega
'til I turn it off
I just discovered something
in **Sonic 2**
To get a million lives
here's what you do:
Stand on your head and
press button "A" and "C"
while you tap button "B"
Twenty-seven times and then
half as much again

Then do the Hokey Pokey and
walk like an Egyptian
Don't talk about Nintendo
or Mario
I won't play TurboGrafx or
Neo•Geo
They don't play
the best games by far
like that **Phantasy Star**
So now
You can play my Sega
if you really beg-a
You can play my Sega
It's time to turn it off
You can play Terminator 2
or Alien 3
Or hunt for Carmen Sandiego
on **Smash TV**
And when you want more
I'll run down to the video store
to get
more games for my Sega
You don't have to beg-a
More games for my Sega
I'd better turn it off.

Remember to send your questions,
corrections and comments to:
The Game Doctor (EG)
330 South Decatur
Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

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After One of the Most Tony La Russa Decided

Announcing

Tony La Russa **BASEBALL II**

It's a whole new ballgame!

How do you improve on the "1992 Sports Game of the Year"? The same way that Tony La Russa improves on a pennant-winning team. You study your players, from their clutch hitting to their personalities in the clubhouse. And you check out the competition, up and down the league.

We did all that. And discovered since La Russa I, a lot has happened in the world of baseball.

We've used that knowledge to create a game that will

continue to master the category. Because we don't know how to do it any other way.

We called upon the same team to create La Russa II. Three-time American League Manager of the Year, Tony La Russa and a game designer with over 20 years of baseball experience. Together they redesigned this game from the ground up. The result is the most complete baseball experience ever, with the best action, the best graphics and the best stats.

If you choose to enter the dugout and be the manager, you're totally responsible for your actions. Which roster is going to work? Is that rotation due for an overhaul? Is it time to bring your secret weapon out of the dugout yet?



All Screens shown are IBM 256-color VGA.

Successful Seasons Ever, to Start All Over Again.

WHEN IT COMES TO THE GRAPHICS, WE'RE PLAYING HARBALL AGAINST THE COMPETITION.

We're talking the largest action playing field visualized with 256-color VGA graphics. You'll have no excuse for not crushing a homer every time since your batting perspective is straight from the catcher's eye. You'll play on the most detailed field of its kind, from the dirt in the base path to the mow lines on the grass. And you'll see instant replays on the largest, most detailed replay screen ever.

MAKE YOUR BEST PLAYS EVER.

In La Russa II, players pivot at second while turning a double play, slide head and feet first, jump, dive, even toss underhand to the first baseman — all with one-touch button action. Each play is covered by Emmy award-winning, nationally-syndicated

announcer, Ron Barr. True-to-life digitized sound effects include everything from the calls of umpires to the crack of the bat.

134 CATEGORIES TO MAKE YOU A BETTER PLAYER.

Only La Russa II gives you the most accurate baseball statistics in every one of them. You'll man your team, with or without Tony's advice, from over 2,000 legendary players and 54 classic teams — or anyone on the current roster. To help in your draft, you can display and print out leaders in 134 stat categories. And stats are tracked throughout the season for every player in every game.

Each and every pitcher is rated for four pitches including fastballs, curves, change-ups and more.



Emmy Award-winning announcer Ron Barr calls the action!

LA RUSSA II EXPANSION DISKS: THINK OF THEM AS THE WORLD SERIES THAT NEVER ENDS.

■ **MLBPA PLAYERS** puts the 1992 season in your hands. Over 950 superstars including Barry Bonds, Dennis Eckersley, Nolan Ryan, Rickey Henderson, Tom Glavine, Cal Ripken, Jr., — they're all here — with big, full color portraits.

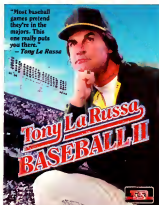
■ **AL/NL STADIUMS** gives you all current 28 major league stadiums, from the winds of San Francisco to the ivy of Chicago — even the new parks open for the '93 season — Colorado and Florida. The detail is incredible, right down to the Green Monster at Fenway. But these aren't just pretty pictures: prevailing winds, altitude, temperature and humidity all affect the flight of the ball — see how Babe Ruth hits the ball at mile-high Denver!



■ **FANTASY DRAFT** is the most powerful, full-featured fantasy draft league disk ever. Now you can pool all available players and conduct a real-life draft session — with 2-32 teams, and any combination of divisions and leagues.

THE SEASON BEGINS NOW.

Fact is, Tony La Russa won't put his name on anything less than the best. If you're looking for true baseball action, the name of the game is TONY LA RUSSA BASEBALL II.



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Take yourself out to the real thing — from flagpole to flagpole, foul line to foul line.

A LOOK TO THE EAST

by Marc Camron

The New and Improved, Bigger and Better, Column of Japanese Games

Welcome to the first full sized installment of **A Look to the East**. Response has been so good, that we have taken this section out of **Hotline**, and given it a couple of pages of its own. If anyone out there has any questions about Japanese gaming, or any subjects they would like to see covered here, please write in and let us know.

So without further adieu, let's get on with the show.

Opening Night

In the United States, video games are released on a *whenever they show, they show* basis. Games are announced and advertised, but they rarely get released on time. They are shipped to certain companies sooner than others, and may show up on store shelves over a period of several days. And while there is a suggested retail price, most companies offer some sort of discount. It is common to call three different stores asking for the same game, and to get three different prices for that game.

In Japan, things are run a little differently. The release of a new game is more like the release of a movie. When the game gets announced, there will be press releases sent out. Magazines will cover the announcement and try to show some sort of preview if possible. This will usually take place many months before the game is released. Sometimes the companies will even go as far as advertising the game while the game is still in the early stages of development. This is especially true with games that are eagerly anticipated, or a sequel to a very successful game.

As much as a year before the public ever sees the game, the hype starts. The bigger the game, the bigger the hype. Articles are written, and everyone gets excited. The level of anticipation is something unheard of in the United States. Even games like **Zelda III** and **Street Fighter II** were not received like this.

Next comes the release. Of course many, many games are released with little to no fanfare. Average games come out all the time, and some people will buy them. And if the game is outstanding, it will get some extra press and become a hit.

But the other games, the ones that receive the year of advance publicity, those games are hits before one copy is ever sold. When the release date is printed in the gaming magazines, planning starts. The big games don't just get released, they get premiered.

This was done recently in the United States, last November with **Sonic 2**day. This was the first time a company ever announced the actual street date for a game in the U.S., and also the first time they publicized it. In Japan this is the norm.

The other difference is in the reaction of the public. On **Sonic 2**day, I went to several stores, and while there were people coming in to buy the game, there was nowhere near the crowds that an exciting game in Japan draws.

When a new game in the **Dragon's Quest** series is released (**Dragon Warrior** here in the United States) the lines will

start forming a day or two in advance. And it is clear that the people waiting are serious about getting their games.

Truancy is a problem, as is children breaking curfew. In one instance, a child told by the authorities that he was too young to be out so late, waited for his father to come and take his place in line, before returning home for bed.

And the line continues to grow as the release draws closer. Stores are forbidden to sell games before the correct time and date of its release, even though the cartridges will show up several days in advance. The public knows this and it just makes the anticipation worse. Imagine ordering a steak for dinner, and being told that your steak is ready but you can't eat it until the date agreed upon between all of the restaurants and the rancher. You know it's there. You can even see it, but it is hands off until the appropriate time.

The crowd grows restless. Finally the moment arrives, and the doors open. The game goes on sale and people line up to lay their money on the counter and receive their product. Copies will literally fly out of the store. Thousands will be sold in a matter of minutes and a couple



Creepers™



The Creepers are on the move. It's the annual trek to the Butterfly Bowls. But, with over 70 levels of factories, caverns, and forests to cross and with the worst sense of direction in the entire animal kingdom, getting them all there is going to take some doing!

Creepers Features:

- Over 70 puzzle levels.
- 256 colors (PC).
- Crazy Creeper animations.
- Difficulty rating from easy to brutal.
- Full soundcard support with 16 funky soundtracks.
- The Creeper-cam with multiple playfield views.



**The mean green
creeping machine**

Look for Creepers crawling
in your favorite software store,
or call: (800) 438-7794



of hours later the game will be sold out. Sorry, come back next week.

Most of the time, everyone who wants the game and was crazy enough to wait in line will get a copy. Still, there is that occasional time when the stores will sell out before the demand is met. Then look out.

This happened with **Dragon's Quest IV**, for the 8-Bit Nintendo. Copies flew off of shelves and when the game was sold out, just a few hours after it first went on sale, there were reports of several people mugged and beaten, their games the only thing taken from them.

This of course would be called Video Game fever.

In many ways, it is apparent how seriously the Japanese take this hobby. While in the U.S., there may be a few licenses of the video game characters, it is usually the top few. The image of Super Mario and Link have become fairly common in toy stores. Sonic the Hedgehog now has his own comic book, and the duo from **Double Dragon** will soon be making their way to the animated cartoon circuit. There is also some merchandising in the works for the Battletoads and Street Fighter II characters. Everything considered, with as many characters as there are, this doesn't amount to much.

In Japan you can find Sonic Soda, courtesy of our Hedgehog friend. There are stuffed animals, bendable figures, comic books, and just about every conceivable knick-knack and doo-dadd. Companies orchestrate and release video game music on CD, and make art portfolios of the designers artwork. Every dime possi-



ble is extracted from the game, before it dies and goes onto game heaven.

And when the hype does die down a few weeks after the games release, the discounts start to kick in. Even the best games are sometimes severely cut in price simply because most of the people interested in it buy it so quickly.

The game stores themselves look like giant video game marketplaces. Games and systems are stacked ten deep, waiting for the adoring game playing public to come along and make their purchases. There is none of this *we have two copies in stock and we'll order more if they sell*. Every game is packed in the store, and can be found in quantity when the game

is new. However, once the game has been discounted, it may not be so easy to find anymore.

How games are released and the stores that sell them go back to the one basic difference between Japanese and American game players. In Japan, games like everything else, are taken more seriously. In the United States, playing video games is a hobby and is treated as such. There is a casual attitude concerning hobbies. And that is probably a good thing. There is so much hustle and bustle in our everyday lives, the things that we do outside of work and school should be treated casually. Enjoyment is key. Enjoy.

Hits of the Far East

Below is a list of the Top Five most popular games in Japan (top row), and the Top Five most anticipated games.



Final Fantasy V



Super Mario Kart



Ranma 1/2 II



Super Tetris 2



Street Fighter 2



Dragon's Quest I&II



Final Fantasy Adv.II



Mother 2



Star Fox



Phantasy Star IV

ARMOUR-GEDDON



ARMOUR-GEDDON

The Balkan War of 1997 devastated the earth . . .

Decades later, two conflicting factions survive: The hostile and combative surface dwellers, and the subterranean society of the Earth Defense Network (EDEN). As a warrior member of EDEN's High Command, it's your sworn duty to defend your civilization from the marauding surface dwellers and destroy their deadly laser beam cannon before it annihilates your people.

Armour-Geddon puts you in the front line! Plan the attack and leap into combat, battling the enemy from the cockpit of six different high-tech vehicles. Striking from the air in your stealth fighter, bomber or helicopter you eradicate the enemy's power grid. Decimating enemy installations, you retrieve their advanced weapons systems in your fleet of surface attack vehicles. Assembling the captured technology, you develop the only weapon on earth powerful enough to crush the enemy's aggression: the Neutron Bomb.

Armour-Geddon takes realism a step further with high speed computer graphics, heads-up cockpit displays, full soundboard support and the sophisticated head to head serial link option that permits two EDEN warriors to simultaneously coordinate their attack.

Any closer to the action and you'd need body armor!

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FANDOM CENTRAL

NAEGE's First Step

Talk is cheap, and actions speak louder than words. Gamers have heard many words from officials of electronic gaming fandom's only national organization.

The National Association of Electronic Gaming Enthusiasts (NAEGE) has now moved from the theoretical to the practical. The first issue of **The NAEGE Journal** has rolled off the press. If you've hung back, uncertain whether to join an unproven group, then this excellent 20-page should be an effective convincer.

Danny Han, co-editor of the 1992 Best Fanzine **Computer Gaming Update**, is in top form, and the slick production by Scott Weller doesn't hurt, either. Not only is this an official organ of which any club can be proud, but it's one of the most informative and entertaining

fanzines I've ever read. Even if NAEGE didn't give members a second regular publication and offer many services, this bimonthly would be worth the yearly fee. Behind the hilarious potshot cartoon are cover articles and columns of paramount interest to every serious electronic gaming hobbyist.

President Ed Finkler's welcome editorial is the first of a series of essays in this inaugural issue by NAEGE officials. Each piece explores the meaning of fandom, and the reasons for participating in it. Every fan will feel a little bit more proud after reading these well-reasoned, yet moving, testimonials to the fellowship of electronic gaming fans, the worth of fanzines, and the desire to help the hobby achieve its full growth potential.

Don't get too misty-eyed, because this fanzine is more than a sounding board.

The essays are mostly to start discussions for the club's bi-monthly letters fanzine. There's plenty of meat, too.

Among the highlights: a report on Japanese gaming, Joe Santulli on classic systems, a guide to becoming a professional game designer, fan news notes, and an extensive selection of fanzine reviews. The contributors include many of fandom's top writers. The NAEGE has shown, in one stroke, that it is worth taking seriously.

A one-year membership, which includes all club publications, is \$10. Send checks, made payable to club treasurer Edward Karpp, to: NAEGE, P.O. Box 240523, Honolulu, HI 96824-0523.

Power Play #1

Edited by Shawn Surmick
25 Truman Ct.

LINKS 386 Pro

Rivaled only

This all new LINKS 386 Pro version of our award-winning LINKS golf game offers many dramatic improvements that make playing LINKS 386 Pro more enjoyable – and gives you exciting new golfing possibilities!

Super VGA Graphics and 386 Power!

The new LINKS 386 Pro, featuring Harbour Town Golf Links, is the first golf game specifically designed for the graphic capabilities and computing power of your personal 386/486 computer system. SUPER VGA 256-color graphics at 640x400 resolution display breathtaking views of LINKS Championship Courses. Your friends won't believe that your computer looks so good!

A lot of listening went into LINKS 386 Pro.

Many of the new features and improvements were added in response to direct requests from LINKS users like you! An exciting new feature is our Unique Computer Opponent. Play a round of golf and save your game. The new LINKS 386 Pro recorded every shot you made. Send your game off to your buddy and he can play against you right on the screen, shot for shot, as if you were right there next to him! We've also included pre-recorded games from worthy opponents, statistics, a variety of game play modes and much, much more.

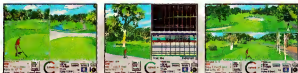
Over 345 combinations of Viewing Windows.

With the new LINKS 386 Pro you're not stuck with just one standard viewing window. With a few clicks of your mouse you can split the screen giving you a real-time reverse view of your shot to the green or add a scaleable top-view that displays the flight of your ball. Scorecard, club distance chart, terrain profile and other panels give you the flexibility to display what you want to view while playing and you can change your viewing setup at anytime!

Texturing of fairways, rough, sand, and other surfaces adds an extra level of realism.

Male and female golfers.

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*Actual Links 386 Pro Super VGA Screens

Boyetown, PA 19512.

Frequent, \$1 per copy, 11 pages

Shawn's review of **Streets of Rage** as a vintage cartridge suggests that he's one of electronic gaming's younger faneds. Despite the usual assortment of first-issue glitches, this video game 'zine has a very promising beginning.

The 1992 retrospective is excellent.

Shawn comments intelligently on the year's gaming headlines, from lower console prices to the overwhelming success of **Street Fighter II**.

Cartridge reviews and impressions of the Virtuality coin-ops fill most of the remaining pages. Although a "Top 10" list indicates that Shawn likes heavy duty action, **Power Play** is one of the first fanzines I've seen that praises **Ecco the Dolphin**, the remarkable yet subtle Genesis title. It is refreshing to see the younger set expand from the "kick, punch and shoot-em-up" video game genre. No doubt, **Power Play** will pride itself on expandability when it comes to reviewing all manner of software titles.

Zap! #6

Edited by Ter Micharoni

142 Justin Ave.

Staten Island, NY 10306

Bi-monthly, \$1.35 per issue, 8 pages

Faned's ingenuity is boundless! Ter produces his all-system 'zine with an Atari ST. Then this dedicated trufan

tapes pages back to back to avoid the unsightliness of having copy on only one side of the sheet. That's *my* definition of dedication. This faned really wants his work to look as sharp as possible. Perhaps he'll change to use a cheap copy center next time and invest all that energy in making **Zap!** even bigger and better.

Zap! covers classic systems as well as today's games. Ter owns quite a few machines, and he tries to keep the material spread among them. Also included are tips, a letter column, and a classified ad section. A little tighter editing would help, but the contents are generally fun to read.

Spectrum #1

Edited by Ara Shirinon

10904 Haislip Ct.

Potomac, MD 20854

Quarterly, \$1.00 per issue, 12 pages

The 16-year-old editor and his three buddies concentrate on SNES, Super Famicom, and the TTI Duo. They review games, report news, and present maps to aid play.

This tightly packed, yet entirely legible, fanzine also offers speculation about the future of CD-ROM and brief profiles of each of its staff members. I greatly appreciated the capsule biographies, because it's the personal touch that makes fanzines so special.

My favorite item in the issue is Ara's good-natured editorial about why **Spectrum** omits critiques of games like **Street Fighter II**. His sensible explanation is that such cartridges get so much space in the prozines that allocating more space in a fanzine seemed like overkill. I agree with Ara that fanzines are a good place to discuss video and computer games that don't get endless coverage in newsstand mags.

Spectrum #1 is one of this year's best first issues. The quartet of writers has made a promising start. As with any hobby mag, these guys are obviously into what they are writing about. They take the time to make sure their articles are as up-to-date and technically correct as possible. Again, the approach of discussing unheralded games is unique and refreshing. This 'zine is definitely going places in the future. They're going to get a lot better very quickly, so encourage this newcomer by quickly sending for an action-packed sample.

Attention Fanzine Editors. This is your column, the best way to reach thousands of potential readers for your amateur publication. If you'd like your fanzine reviewed in a future issue of **Electronic Games**, send it to:

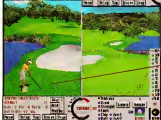
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What Reviewers Are Saying about LINKS 386 Pro:

Strategy Plus:

"...with LINKS 386 Pro, Access has not so much pushed back the 'envelope' as redefined the term 'simulation.' Right from the opening screen it's clear that something special is happening here."

"...represents a new generation of computer game. Just play it and love it."

PC Entertainment:

"...for sheer, unadulterated realism, no golf simulation equals the performance of LINKS 386 Pro."

"...if you're serious about golf simulations, treat yourself to LINKS 386 Pro. And if you don't own a 386 to run it on, you've finally got a real good reason to lay out the money for an upgrade."

Computer Gaming World:

"...if you have a fast 386 or 486, think of LINKS 386 Pro as a Ferrari or a Corvette."



New Features for Links 386 Pro!

- Seven different viewing windows, with over 345 different combinations.
- Improved club selection feature.
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- Statistics recorded for each player, game and course, with optional print out.
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- "Profile View" which shows changes in elevation between the ball and the pin.
- All new sounds! Supports SoundBlaster, SoundBlaster Pro, AdLib and other compatible sound cards & RealSound.
- Improved swing indicator for more realistic putting.
- Male or female golfers, with 10 different shirt colors to choose from.
- Spectacular texturing of fairways, rough, sand, water not offered in other golf games.

Revealed: Nintendo's Multimedia Plans.

EG rips away the veil of secrecy!

by the Editors of EG

Companies have personalities, just like people do. Interactive electronic entertainment offers plenty of examples. Capcom is very straight and conservative, EA is laid-back in blue jeans, and Acclaim is aggressively enterprising.

Then there's Nintendo. Images of Marlon Brando as the Godfather and Star Wars' Darth Vader come to mind immediately. Nintendo is indomitable persistence, complete dedication, and untamed competitiveness.

Yet when it comes to CD-ROM, Don Corleone turns into Hamlet. "To CD or Not to CD?" is the question Nintendo executives seem to ask in every public discussion of multimedia.

The usually resolute video game giant has made more reversals of direction than an average candidate for political office.

Rumors of a 16-Bit CD-ROM peripheral for the SNES raged through the game business a year ago. Reliable sources reported that developers were working on the operating system in secret, and that it would challenge the then-imminent Sega CD much sooner than expected.

Then came Nintendo's August 1992 announcement. Spokesman Peter Main told the world that Nintendo would not produce a 16-Bit CD-ROM system at all.

Nintendo claimed its decision resulted from research showing that the games



would not be sufficiently better than current 16-Bit cartridges. Rather than disappoint its loyal customers, Nintendo declared the decision to wait for a more fitting time to introduce such technology.

There's no reason for Nintendo to be less self-serving in its communications with the public than any other large corporation. True as the given reason might be, the poor reception Sega's CD-ROM was getting in Japan at the time must've colored Nintendo's decision to some degree.

The introduction of Sega CD in the United States may also have contributed to Nintendo's corporate disdain for 16-Bit CD-ROM. Sega was sure to have at least a year's head start, even if Nintendo pursued a 16-Bit-based multimedia system. By denying the value of producing a CD-ROM drive to a does not upgrade their 16-Bit system, only extend it,

Nintendo told its legion of fans to hold onto their money awhile longer until a more significant system is made available.

The on-again, off-again romance between Nintendo and Sony added to the confusion. At this writing, it is still not clear whether Sony will make a CD-

ROM unit working with the Super Nintendo — possibly their integrated Play Station — or if they have given up on the idea and will now choose to pursue other endeavors.

Toward the end of 1992, new rumors surfaced about another Nintendo CD-ROM project. A January 1993 Nintendo press release lent credence to the stories about clandestine development of hardware and systems software.

The communiqué read, in part: "From its inception, Nintendo has been at the forefront of video game technology. Not simply for the sales of introducing the latest piece of hardware, but enhancing the game-playing experience for the video game player."

"At Nintendo, the name of the game is the games, which means we always put the needs of our players first. Our continued success is based on our ability to develop games that provide hours of fun and adventure at an affordable price," said Peter Main, Nintendo's vice president, marketing, to underscore this point.

The release summed up Nintendo's latest CD-ROM policy decision: "The company announced plans to develop a sys-

tem using the more advanced CD-ROM XA format powered by a 32-Bit processor offering game developers six to eight times the power and processing speed of current machines."

"For the past few years, Nintendo has had the resources and ability to manufacture and market a CD system, if we thought that was the right thing to do," Main amplifies. "But our goal is to be best, not first. It's the same thing we saw with 16-Bit systems. If you wait and provide a superior product, consumers will respond, just like they did with the Super NES."

Which is another way of saying, "Don't buy now or you'll pay for it later when the really good machine comes along."

When, exactly, is "later"? Opinions

conflict, but **EG's** confidential canvas of leading executives suggests that a June 1994 introduction at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago makes the most sense.

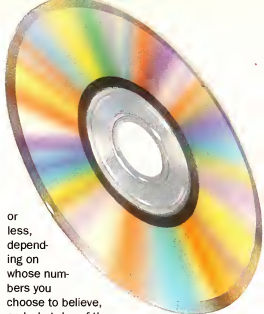
"Forget Christmas 1993," states a multimedia publishing executive who asked not to be identified.

"That's not the way Nintendo does things."

What he meant is that, though Nintendo wouldn't be the first company to introduce a system without adequate software, it isn't likely.

A stronger library of titles for the introduction will allow sales to stay strong, even after the initial novelty of the system wares off.

Nintendo's experience with the SNES roll-out should make the company reluctant to debut its CD-ROM with only a half-dozen disks. The SNES, which is now close to half the 16-Bit market in the U.S., (more



or less, depending on whose numbers you choose to believe, and what day of the week it is) started off fairly slowly because there was no supporting library of games.

Nintendo probably won't make that mistake a second time. The specifications document for the CD-ROM unit were only distributed in December 1992, so there isn't time to ready an appreciable number of games for a Christmas 1993 debut.

Once the Christmas season is past, the logical target is CES. Nintendo can show the device to the buyers, along with software in close-to-finished condition, and take orders for fourth quarter 1994. If the manufacturer sticks to its usual strategy, look for limited availability during the holiday season, with shortages easing during first quarter 1995.

Hardware Overview

Nintendo drew static from gamers for leaving NES owners in the cold, without compatibility, when it introduced 16-Bit. It has learned from its mistake, and it will not be marketing anything that obsoletes the SNES.

Instead of a whole new machine, Nintendo will introduce the CD-ROM Adapter Kit. It has three main components, the Nintendo Disc Drive, the ND cartridge for SNES, and a new AC adapter. The cartridge, when connected to the SNES, gives the original console 32-Bit processing capability. The AC adapter supplies sufficient power to run the ND drive, which plays the CD-ROM game disks.

The Guts

The ND System Cartridge is packed with chips that speed data crunching and greatly expand available memory. When it is inserted into an SNES console's cartridge slot, it charges the system with the 32-Bit processing power Nintendo needs for its multimedia games.

Nintendo's Rocky Road to CD

Nintendo's official announcements of CD plans have evolved over the last couple of years. They reflect the company's uncertainty about the best way to enter the multimedia field.

Here's the chronology:

- January 1990 - Nintendo and Sony agree to develop the Sony Playstation, to combine the SNES with Sony's CD.
- June 1, 1991 - Nintendo announces it will work with Philips Electronics to develop a CD-ROM/XA compact disc player in Phillip's XA/CD-I format to attach to Super Famicoms and SNES units.
- January 9, 1992 - Nintendo announces talks with Sony regarding Sony's CD-ROM system and compatibility with the Super NES compact disc accessory.
- January 9, 1992 - Nintendo announces development of a CD-ROM accessory for the SNES, to be released in the USA in January 1993, using the Philips' CD-ROM XA format.

• August 1992 - Nintendo scraps plans for CD system based on 16-Bit processor, and announces they will use the CD-ROM XA format with a 32-Bit processor.

• October 13, 1992 - Nintendo announces an agreement with Sony, for Sony to market a system that combines the SNES and CD-ROM drive.

• October 13, 1992 - Nintendo announces it will launch the CD-attachment for the SNES, using Philips' CD-ROM XA format, in August 1993.

• October 13, 1992 - Nintendo says it will continue to work with Philips on a CD-ROM XA "bridge format" to make the SNES CD software compatible with Philips CD-I format.

• January 1993 - Nintendo's Peter Main tells the press that Nintendo will definitely not introduce CD in 1993, and that they have not yet delivered the design specifications to SONY. The company will continue its evaluation, and expects to determine by June whether they are ready to proceed.

The special cartridge centers on the SCCP (Super NES CD-ROM System Co-Processor) chip. It contains a 32-Bit RISC central processing unit, with a 21.47727 MHz no wait clock and a one kilobyte command cache.

The co-processor, as its name implies, works in parallel with the SNES' 16-Bit CPU.

Nintendo is particularly proud of the SCCP chip's number crunching. It adds, subtracts, multiplies, divides, and performs floating point arithmetic operations.

The CD-ROM Decoder introduces the HANDS (Hyper-Advanced Nintendo Data Transfer System). It has a 65C02 core with a

4.29545 MHz. clock. It can read data out of the main, 8-Meg memory without stopping the SCCP chip. This should virtually eliminate the pauses and slowdowns which plague some SNES games.

HANDS also enhances the system's sound production capability. It generates

four audio channels which can play while the system is also generating sound through the CD.

The ND (Nintendo Disc) drive is a compact unit. It measures 240mm x 200mm x 74mm and weighs less than 2-1/2 lbs.

It transfers data at two speeds, mode 2, form 1 (150 Kbytes per second) and mode 2 form 2 (300 Kbytes per second). Presumably, the main use for the smaller speed lets the system play standard CD audio disks.

Access time is between 1.4 and 0.7 seconds. Nintendo claims a high degree of reliability for the ND drive. The prototype has a read error rate of 10^{-12} or less.

Games for the system will be encoded on CD disks that can store up to 540 megabytes. Each disk is encased in a cartridge to eliminate accident damage to the code-bearing medium. The case also includes a security chip to prevent illegal duplication and 256 Kbits of backup memory.

When the entire upgrade is in place, connected to a standard SNES, it has 14-Meg of main and supplemental memory, plus 2-Meg of system ROM. (The basic SNES console has 1-Meg of memory.)

The Bottom Line

From the gamer's perspective, all this power means rapid screen graphics refresh, faster movement of objects and characters, and the ability to pull off some neat data manipulation tricks that produce effects impossible on a 16-Bit console.

The only thing Nintendo must watch



out for is the head start other companies such as Sega and

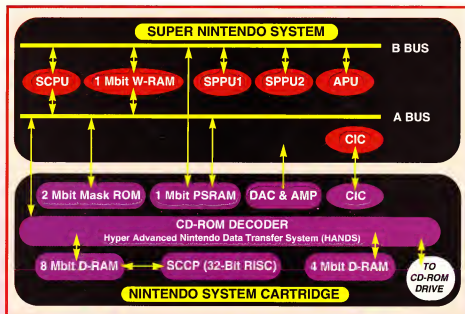
TTI already have producing multimedia products. As soon as some prototypes are available, and maybe some early game screens, they should be distributed to the public. While it is good to see Nintendo taking their time to make this machine right, consumers are getting frustrated with all of the talk when there is not as much as a screen shot to show. Hopefully the machine will live up to Nintendo's promises.

Watch EG for all of the latest breaking news as the vapor we've been wondering about, begins to take form in reality.



SUPER NES CD-ROM SPECS

Main Memory:	
D-RAM	8 Mbits
PS-RAM	1 Mbit
(Super NES Memory)	1 Mbit
Supplemental Memory:	
D-RAM	4 Mbit
System ROM	2 Mbits
Co-Processor (SCCP):	
Type	32-Bit RISC
Clock Speed	21.477 MHz
Cache	8 Kbit
CD-ROM Decoder (HANDS):	
Type	65C02
Clock Speed	4.295 MHz
CD-ROM Drive:	
Standard Access Time	0.7 Sec.
Max. Access Time	1.4 Sec.
Read Error Rate	10^{-12} or less
Data Output Speed (Norm)	150 Kbytes/sec
Data Output Speed (2x)	300 Kbytes/sec



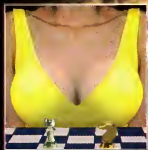
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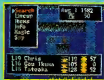
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It's going to take more than a couple of jumping jacks to prepare for this adventure! After all, no one ever said being a ninja was easy. Learn how to deliver killer blows with your trusty sword and send a barrage of throwing stars at your enemies. Explore dungeon mazes and battle giant rats, toxic worms and super leeches that call these caves home! Snoop on your enemies as you explore the countryside, but watch out for bushwhackers eager to steal your gold. If you train hard and master the ninja arts you may live long enough to exact revenge on the warlord that killed your family. One final word of advice: "Quiet ninjas live longer."



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Race through dungeon mazes



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E

S

by the Editors of Electronic Games

The video, computer, and multimedia games set to debut in the next six months are hotter than mid-summer weather and more fun than a day at the beach. It's an understatement to say that there'll be something for every taste; the quantity and quality heading our way virtually insures that there will be many games for every taste.

Action: Real-Time Romps

Leading an outstanding crop of side-scrollers is **Bubsy Bobcat: Claws Encounters of the Furred Kind** (Accolade/SNES). Set to debut this month, **Claws Encounters** is an interactive cartoon. The cat has distinct mannerisms and expressions, and even speaks.

The publisher hopes **Rocket Knight Adventures** (Konami/Genesis) will please fans of cute games as much as **Sonic**. The on-screen hero has a jet pack and knives to get him through the seven levels in this scroller. The side perspective graphics are fairly good, but playability and charm are the main strengths of **Rocket Knight Adventures**.

ToeJam & Earl 2 (Sega/Genesis) is more action-oriented than the first game. It presents bigger characters and more animation. The designers promise that all of Funkatron will come to life when it hits the stores in late summer or early fall.

Sega is already revving up development on **Sonic 3**. No one knows what the hedgehog will be doing in this one, but Sega has selected a stateside team for the project.

Television continues to generate game licenses. **Tiny Toon Adventure: Buster's Hidden Treasure** (Konami/Genesis) is a 33-level extravaganza. The action is somewhat conventional, but the graphics are outstanding. Particularly notable are the characters' facial expressions, which put a lot of fun and personality into the proceedings.



Bubsy the Bobcat continued soaring to great new heights at the Winter CES.

Tiny Toons: Buster Busts Loose (Konami/SNES) is totally different from the previously released Genesis cart. The graphics are softer, more pastel than the source material. Though the play-action is standard side-scroller, the SNES edition may be the better of the two 16-Bit entries.

The graphics in **Ren & Stimpy** (Taito/SNES) are amazingly similar to those of the Nickelodeon cartoon show. This is a jumping-and-shooting game, but the slick humorous sequences are a redeeming factor.



Rocket Knight Adventures promises to be an exciting side-scrolling adventure.

Simple game play, implemented with multiple interfaces, may make David Crane's **Toys** (Absolute Entertainment/SNES, Genesis) more entertaining than the box office sleeper.

Animation and graphics are the strong points of **Dinosaurs for Hire** (Sega/Genesis). It's fierce action is derived from the comic book of the same name.

A circus bat stars in **Aero the Acrobat** (Sunsoft/SNES). The scrolling action game is loaded with entertaining play-field features, all depicted in a compellingly cute art style. It doesn't explain why a bat needs a helium balloon, parachute, and other flight aids, but it may prove too cute to quit.

The highly playable **Super Troll Land** (American Software Corp./SNES, Game Boy) is based on the popular license. The graphics are above average, and quite colorful on the SNES. The play-mechanic is garden-variety side-scrolling in the **Mario** manner. **Super Troll Land** will interest younger players.

The 1992 success of **Street Fighter II** shows that fighting games haven't lost any appeal in the switch from 8-Bit to 16-Bit consoles. The following are among the most interesting of the many hand-to-hand combat games.

Mortal Kombat (Acclaim/SNES, Genesis) looks like the arcade game, including the digitized/rotoscoped figures.

Although it's squarely in the fighting game mold, the combat is fierce enough to please even action aces.

Potentially the best real-time action game featuring the Dark Knight is **Batman Returns** (Konami/SNES). This fighting, driving, and shooting game boasts unusually beautiful graphics and lots of hot action. The cowed hero's fancy cape-work is a visual highlight. Konami has bought the rights to *Batman: The Animated Series* and expects to have a game ready next fall.

Prince of Persia (Konami/SNES) has made its video game debut. Jordan Mechner's classic comes to the SNES with graphics as good as, if not superior to, the computer version.



Intense fighting action on the NES will be enhanced by **Mighty Final Fight**.

Will **Shinobi 3: Return of Ninja Master** (Sega/Genesis) herald the rebirth of this once-popular martial arts hero? Sega tends to push this fighting cartridge hard. Larger, well-animated fighters and intri-

cate background artwork are the main bragging points.

Those who want a change-of-pace fighting contest may enjoy **Mighty Final Fight** (Capcom/NES). It uses kid characters but needs no apologies for the quality of its action, which is excellent.

Raging Fighter (Konami/Game-boy) is another festival of hand-to-hand combat. It features unusually large characters.

Zen: Intergalactic Ninja (Konami/NES) is a multi-directional scroller with 12 play stages. The sharp graphics are equal to the fast action.

Despite the trend toward less shooting in action contests, there are enough forthcoming titles to satisfy the itchiest trigger fingers.

Monsters (LucasArts/SNES, Genesis) is a multi-directional scrolling, angled topdown game with a visual perspective that recalls **ToeJam & Earl**. Each level broadly parodies a different creature feature. The play-mechanic is the usual rescue-humans-by-running-over-them scenario. What it lacks in nuance, **Monsters** makes up for with much hotter action



than previous games of this general type. It's a cart full of mummies, werewolves, mad psychos, martians and other refugees from the sci-fi film archives.

Cybemonator (Konami/SNES) has some of the best action for this system since **Super Star Wars**. The hero, wearing this year's obligatory jet pack, zooms through some mighty flashy graphics while laying down a barrage of lethal fire.

The successful Dark Horse comic book has spawned **Alien vs. Predator** (Activision/SNES, MS-DOS). The plotline is refreshingly direct: the Alien fights the Predator. The computer and video games will be substantially different, much like the recent **Batman Returns**, because each is being developed separately.

Crystal Ball Confidential

The Editor draws the Big Picture by Arnie Katz

For everything there is a season. As all gamers know, the three fall months are the big selling period. Since companies want a hot title in the stores at Christmas, end-of-the-year releases are often blockbusters like **Sonic 2** and **Street Fighter II**. What kind of games get published during the warm weather months?

One category is "delayed product." These are the carts and disks that were scheduled for launch in time for the holidays but didn't quite make it. Frequently, they are incredible creations that simply took a bit longer to polish than originally planned.

The Winter and Summer Consumer Electronics Shows are linchpins of virtually every company's marketing

strategy. The SCES in Chicago is the place to show the wares for the Christmas buying season.

The WCES in Las Vegas is a little different. After a fourth quarter like 1992, when sales rose over 25% across the entire spectrum of electronic gaming, publishers are in an expansive mode. In the afterglow of a successful Christmas, they look to the future. This is when the most ambitious projects get started. The Winter CES showcases some of the most original games, often in early development. These titles reach stores three-to-six months later.

The 1993 Winter Consumer Electronics Show displayed the best group of new games seen at a CES in years. That should make this spring and summer a feast for gaming gamers.

Now, dig into **EG's** exclusive preview and see what's on the menu!



Choose your favorite mutant fighter to smash through **Alien vs. Predator**.

Chase H.Q. II (Taito/Genesis) maintains the visual perspective of the original, but there's more variety in the play-experience. Now players can put more than one car through its crash-and-bang antics.

SNES and Genesis editions are coming this spring for **Action 52**

A V.I.P. TOUR OF

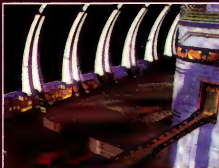
CES

(Active Enterprises/NES). It's a whole library of games in a single cart, including adventures, shooters, space and sports. At the end of every level, the player can continue the current game or return to the main menu for a new selection. Despite containing 52 games, **Action 52** offers surprisingly good quality—even though its price works out a buck a game.

Action-Strategy: Think Fast!

The first game incorporating the much-hyped SFX chip is **StarFox** (Nintendo/SNES), a space combat flight simulator. The player and his band of space mercenaries blast through ten planets to restore liberty to a solar system under a tyrant's heel. The SFX speeds things up and allows for lots of polygon-filled visuals, but **StarFox** isn't the new benchmark for cartridges.

With **Strike Commander** finally ready to fly, Origin Systems is looking to the stars once again. **Privateer** (Origin/MS-DOS) is set in the **Wing Commander** universe. It offers similar missions, but adds resource management. The player either follows the well-conceived story or takes assignments without reference to



Wing Commander aficionados will enjoy Origin Systems' new game, **Privateer**.

the plot.

A thorough facelift has breathed excitement into **Mechwarrior** (Activision/SNES). The action is less random and organized into missions. The *manga*-style artwork is fair, but the animation is

particularly good.

All the first-person fly-and-shoot contests aren't set in the future. Although air combat simulators aren't quite as popular now as a couple of years ago, a few new ones are slated for production between now and September.

Tomado

(Spectrum Holobyte/MS-DOS) simulates the British combat jet that wins all the prizes at the international competitions. It has new weapons and a very rich target environment. The graphics are spectacular. Pilots can choose either the air defense or ground attack versions of the plane. Modem play is also possible, which widens the choice of opponents.

Top Gun: Guts & Glory (Konami/Game Boy) is an easy-to-play combat flight simulator that shows significant improvement over the earlier GB **Top Gun** title. It moves VERY fast and the graphics are solid for the GB. Release is expected in April or May.

Not all action combat games give players a first-person view. Some mix strategy with the tactics to provide a complete mind/body workout.

The terrorists from **Desert Strike** are back in **Jungle Strike** (Electronic Arts/Genesis). The first campaign requires the player to defend Washington, D.C. from terrorists. The second involves jungle warfare at night and the third deals with water rescues. The gamer gets to use a hovercraft and motorcycles as well as the Apache attack helicopter in this intense, yet subtle action-combat title.

Seal Team (Electronic Arts/MS-DOS) puts the player in command of an elite naval commando team in 80 Vietnam missions. This eerily realistic game features first- and third-person combat, plus overhead-view maps that portray the whole situation.

Succeed where Dr. Frankenstein stumbled and build the perfect fighting machine in **Cyborg Justice** (Sega/Genesis). There's a lot of strategy in fitting together the pieces, but the designer didn't neglect the action. A robot can rip a foe's arm off and destroy him!

Flashback (U.S. Gold/Genesis; SSI/MS-DOS), by Delphine, is a massive side-



scroller. The visuals merge rotoscoping and polygons, plus cinematic intermissions, and lots of animations. The result is so startling that many have mistaken the Genesis version for a new Sega-CD product!

James Pond 3 (Electronic Arts/Genesis) sends the intrepid James Pond to the moon, where he must stop the evil doctor who's trying to steal all the dairy products. This fast action game has about one hundred levels, and lots of cute graphics.

An additional 80 puzzles for **Incredible Machine** (Dynamix/MS-DOS) are on the



More than 80 brain-teasing puzzles will be added for **The Incredible Machine**.

way from designer Jeff Tunnell. The disk, which should be in stores soon, also has 12 new tools.

Obitus (Bulletproof/SNES) is a fine conversion of the computer title and preserves the all-important 3-D effects.

Sports: Armchair Athletics

Tony LaRussa Baseball (Electronic Arts/Genesis) is the cartridge version of the computer game **Tony LaRussa Ultimate Baseball**. It's the first true alternative to **Tommy Lasorda Baseball** for

Genesis fans. Great graphics portray real team and players in a statistically influenced action contest. Its attractions include a spotlight ball-tracker, a visible bullpen and a pop-up window for players ejected from the game.

The main innovation in **MVP Football** (Capcom/SNES) is heavy use of Mode 7



Incredible scaling and rotation are offered in Capcom's new MVP Football.

rotation. The interface is adequate, but may not be easy for everyone to master.

Mutant League Football (Electronic Arts/Genesis) beats **Grave Yardage**, an earlier creature gridiron title, by several touchdowns. It's somewhat like playing **John Madden** with monsters; it would be a good action-simulation even without the weird athletes.

David Robinson NBA Action (Spectrum Holobyte-Saga/MS-DOS) is not to be confused with the David Robinson hoop game *Saga* published for the Genesis, is an admirable action-packed basketball simulation.

Both motorbikes and speedboats are ready to race in **Kawasaki** (GameTek/SNES, Genesis). Speed, speed, and more speed is the magic ingredient that lifts this game out of the "average" category.

Wilson Pro Staff Golf (Konami/MS-DOS) employs the standard **Links/PGA Tour Golf** behind-the-golfer presentation with a couple of spins: an almost-instan-

aneous redraw of backgrounds and an action-oriented approach to the swing. It may not please golf addicts, but **Wilson Pro Staff Golf** is right down the fairway for action buffs.

Summer Challenge (Accolade/Genesis), due in May, will remind some of Epyx's legendary **Winter Games** and **Summer Games**. Its eight events are: Archery, Kayak, Pole Vault, High Jump, Hurdles, Equestrian, Cycling and Javelin. The most appealing events are Archery, Pole Vault, Equestrian and Javelin.

All games share the same pseudo first-person perspective, with the camera right behind the on-screen athlete. The Instant Replay features multiple-speed review. Up to 10 can compete at three different play levels.

Eddie Dombrower, creator of **Earl Weaver**, will soon be as much of a household name among adventurers. He's designing **Return to Zork** (Activision/MS-DOS). It's based on the classic text game trilogy, but its superb graphics and pop-up interface are strictly state-of-the-art.

If there aren't enough real sports games for you, try games based on these fanciful ones.

Earth Invitational GGA (Icom/PC-CD, Macintosh CD) takes golf in a startling new direction. Each hole is set in a different part of the world, such as on the Matterhorn, Mt. Everest, Arches National Park in Utah, and other bizarre locales. The gamer chooses the opponents from a group of imaginary golfers.

Sid Mead's designs for the futuristic cars in **Cyber Race** (Cyber Dreams/MS-DOS, Macintosh, Amiga, PC-CD) are rounding into final form. The science fiction race uses "voxel" 3-D graphic technology similar to **Comanche Maximum Overkill**, but more colorful. Drivers can interact with other characters between races. Like **Wing Commander**, the game will have optional speech disks.

Adventures/RPGs: Vicarious Visions

There's no letup in the Dark Fantasy craze. Here are some of the eeriest adventures and role-playing games publishers are conjuring for video, computer, and multimedia systems.

Darkside of Xeen (New World/MS-DOS) shares an identical interface with **Clouds of Xeen**. If both are installed onto the hard drive, the adventurer gains free run of the combined world. Finishing both stories earns a special, entirely separate, third end game sequence. While **Clouds** was a battle to try to halt the corruption of the land, **Darkside** features a land that is already corrupted. **World of**

Xeen, a multimedia disk that includes both parts, is expected next fall.

Event Horizons, which authored **The Summoning**, will return with an adult horror fantasy, **Veil of Darkness** (SSI/MS-DOS). Auto-mapping, a print option for the dialogue, and the point-and-click interface promote rapid play. Special music and sound effects maintain an eerie mood.

Dark Seed (Cyber Dreams), which thrilled PC owners with its H.R. Geiger art, is coming for the Macintosh late this spring. Mac adventurers will also get an expanded manual with background stories and photos about the game and its creators.

Tired of evil creatures that suck the marrow from human bones and the like? Conventional, medieval fantasies aren't as numerous these days, but don't worry about a shortage. Some of the best titles in development are as follows:

AD&D Unlimited Adventures: Build Your Own Fantasy Role-Playing Epic (SSI/MS-DOS, Macintosh) is a tool for creating adventures in the format of SSI's Gold Box line. The point-and-click interface selects from 100 monsters, 16 non-player characters, and 250 art images.

Final Fantasy III (Square Soft/SNES) is 30% larger, more challenging, and less linear than the previous title in the series, yet it retains the popular game-playing techniques and excellent sound and graphics from earlier versions.



Final Fantasy III extends the impressive adventure series from Square.

The creators of **Final Fantasy Adventure II** (Square Soft/SNES) put more action into the second chapter of the saga, and the game is definitely the better for it. An overhead map shows the whole world, and then zooms in on specific areas. The **Zelda**-style combat system does the job right for this promising action-adventure.

Eye of The Beholder III (SSI/MS-DOS), an in-house project, features more color,



Coaching a team of twisted mutants may not be as easy as it looks.

music, drama and companions. Even some of the monsters will join the party under the right conditions.

Beyond Shadowgate (Icom/PC-CD, Duo Super CD) returns this early 1980s hit to the active list in a new and updated form. It's planned for an April release.

Inindo (Koei/SNES) is something new for this publisher. It's an action-filled fantasy RPG, but with more strategy than most games of this genre.

Simultaneous modern play is the drawing card for **The Red Crystal** (QQP/MS-DOS). Questers work together or compete to discover the secret of life. Both



The PC favorite, **Spellcraft**, now can be enjoyed and experienced on the SNES.

view the action in an angled overhead perspective.

Spellcraft (ASCII/SNES) is a fairly straight conversion of the wonderful PC title. This magic adventure nicely bridges the gap between action adventures and true RPGs for cartridge gamers.

Speech makes **Dune CD** (Virgin/PC-CD) more cinematic than the floppy. It includes the whole beginning pre-credits speech by Virginia Madsen and many new scenes. The game play is substantially unchanged, but the multimedia edition is much more dramatic.

Kronlog: The Nazi Paradox (Merit/MS-DOS) takes place in an alternate world in which the Nazis have crushed all opposition. The hero time travels to the past to undo the events which have put the Reich in power.



Whoa! Unnecessary zoom, dude! Party on with **Wayne and Garth** on the PC!

Computergamers will be worthy of the interactive **Wayne's World** (Capstone, MS-DOS). In this graphic adventure, Wayne and Garth try to save the world by staging a pizza-thon.

Total Distortion (Pop Rocket/Macintosh CD) is a rock 'n' roll adventure with a science fiction beat. The player searches the multiverse for musicians to make videos. Then, he sells the video and uses the profits to finance better equipment for the next one.

Ambush (tentative title) (Sir Tech/MS-DOS) simulates an expedition to an unexplored land. A miracle healing drug can be made from the sap of the trees on a remote island. The hero, a mercenary, rescues a missing scientist and his daughter to collect the maximum possible amount of the wonder medicine.

Jim Walls and Cheryl Loyd are in top form with their newest mystery, **Blue Force** (Tsunami/MS-DOS). The hero is the son of a policeman who gets murdered while investigating gun smugglers. Throughout his investigation, he gets flashbacks, which gradually provide clues to the identity of his father's killers.



Total Distortion allows gamers to try their hand at making music videos.

Strategy: Brain Testers
Dominion (Mindcraft/MS-DOS), by Patrick "Siege" Hughes, features SVGA

overhead view of the terrain. Gamers click on icons to get closer views. The gamer is assisted by a group of Ministers, who offer advice, and can even run events on their own. The player interviews candidates to pick the right circle of advisors. **Dominion** may be constructed to interlock with **Siege** or **Ambushcade**, but that decision is still not firm for this late-summer program.

In **Caesar** (Impressions/MS-DOS, Amiga), the gamer builds the Roman empire. Designed by David Lester, it uses an overhead view with objects and people shown in a three-quarter slant. The gamer erects villas, walls, and roads, manages workers, creates industries, and levies taxes. Gamers may connect **Caesar** to **Cohort 2** to play through intense battles.

Master of the World (QQP/MS-DOS), intended for late summer, draws randomly generated world maps. Gaining control over the territory through trading and conquest is the objective.

Rules of Engagement 2 (Impressions/MS-DOS) is a strategic space combat game where the player commands a fleet of starships, engaging enemy ships in campaigns composed of multiple combat missions. The game includes both a mission and a campaign builder, allowing the player to design and construct both ships and their captains, specify the physical and mental capabilities of the enemy forces, and more!

Bullfrog Products, known for **Populous** and **Power Monger**, should have **Syndicate** (Electronic Arts/MS-DOS) ready for summer introduction. The object of the game, which EA describes as "a cross between *Bladerunner* and *Risk*," is to control a city-state in the future. Up to eight players design and control groups of four cyborgs to execute missions such as "secure a building," or "rescue the mayor." Success gains the player one of the 60 cities.

Sherlock Holmes III (Icom/multimedia) will ship in April. It offers three new mysteries, and features improved graphics and sound. Based on a popular non-electronic game, **Sherlock Holmes III**, like its predecessors, should test the deductive powers of all amateur sleuths.

Military strategy games, once played only by hardcore strategists, are seeking a wider audience these days. Streamlined player interfaces in computerized military simulations and attempts to put minutely detailed war games on cartridge are examples of new marketing approaches we'll see this year.

PTO (Koei/Genesis, MS-DOS), though as richly detailed as any computer simu-

lation, will actually be a cartridge before it becomes a disk. The player can lead either side through the Pacific Theatre of Operations in World War II.

June will see publication of a mammoth military simulation, **World War II Battles of the Pacific** (QQP/MS-DOS). Despite its vast scope, the design emphasizes the same ease-of-play that has made this publisher's titles so appealing even to those who aren't rabid war gamers.

David Grabowski's The Blue & The Gray (Impressions/MS-DOS) recreates America's Civil War, using a game-system derived from table top miniatures. The gamer commands armies, divisions or units of 50 men. Period graphics evoke the mid-19th Century in this May release.



Rules of Engagement 2 lets players destroy and conquer enemy armadas.

Empire Deluxe (New World/MS-DOS) updates the original and is easier to play. This strategy war game is playable by up to six human or computer generals face-to-face, on modem, through a network, or via E-Mail.

Ambushcade (Mindcraft/MS-DOS) is a **Siege**-style war game, with open terrain instead of castles. It is event-oriented, and the results of each scenario affect what happens in the ones that follow.

The very good are getting even better. Improved editions of **The Perfect General** and **The Lost Admiral** (Quantum Quality Productions/MS-DOS) will be ready in September. The new editions permit modem play, use VGA graphics, and feature much more complicated campaigns. The revamped **General**, for example, has 21 difficulty levels and introduces tactical air support.

Gamers remain in their comfortable chair while playing **Aerobiz** (Koei/SNES, Genesis). It simulates running a worldwide airline for one to four players. The gamer can play dur-

ing the years 1963-85 or 1983-2015 against rivals under the program's own technical direction.

Rags to Riches (Interplay/MS-DOS) is a good old-fashioned money game. Like **Monopoly**, this family game simplifies in the name of playability.

An insight into the hard facts of modern agriculture is a bonus for players of **SimFarm** (Maxis/MS-DOS). Electronic farmers plant, cultivate, and market crops in the latest in the Sim series. The program contains options that automate many aspects of play so that you don't have to make it a full-time hobby to enjoy this economic simulation.

Battle Chess (Interplay) really started something. Side-by-side with straightforward chess programs are a group of heavily animated titles that bring pieces to life on the screen.

Terminator 2 Judgment Day Cyber Chess (Capstone/MS-DOS, PC-CD) has the famous T2 characters. The company's **Grand Master Chess** provides the engine, but the movement and capture animations are more reminiscent of **Battle Chess** (Interplay).

Off-the-wall humor meets the 64-square war in **National Lampoon's Chessmeister 5 Billion and One** (Spectrum Holobyte/MS-DOS). The magazine's wild humor is very evident in the hilarious movement and capture animations and slapstick sound effects. The interface is simple enough for the casual chess players who'll be the primary market for this hilarious title. The world's oldest strategy



Atlantic City is just a keystroke away when you gamble with Trump Castle III.

game now has even more excitement.

Place your bets! Gambling games are a good way to take chances without risking the family homestead.

Trump Castle III (Capstone/MS-DOS, PC-CD) is the first title in this gambling game series to implement super VGA graphics. The game does more than play a selection of contests of chance; it gives the player the feel of being a guest at the Atlantic City, N.J., resort. Among new features is the ability to play **Trump Castle III** on a network or over a modem.

Caesar's Palace (Virgin/SNES), is a visit to the famous casino to play games like craps, keno, and horse racing. Touches like ATM machines add realism. QQP is also working on a casino game, but the publisher hasn't yet picked a title. High rollers cruise from hotel to hotel along the famous Las Vegas Strip.

Educational electronic games come in cycles. It looks like the industry is moving into a brand new golden age of computer edutainment.

Mario Is Missing (Software Toolworks/SNES) proves again that cartridge games based on computer titles don't have to be crippled reshapes. Luigi's hunt for his missing brother looks much better on the 16-Bit console than a 386 system. This edutainment game has a more complex and varied world than the category's current champ, **Carmen Sandiego**.

In Where in Space Is Carmen Sandiego? (Brøderbund/MS-DOS), landing in May, the crook-catching leads to a better knowledge of our solar system and the history of space flight. Digitized NASA photos add authenticity.

The Wrap-Up

Schedules slip. Some of the games discussed here won't appear quite as soon as their publishers hope. Balancing that, though, will be dozens of unexpected new titles. EG will follow these and other electronic games and keep you up to date as projects become reality.





The 1993 Electronic Games Awards

Here are Your Votes for the Year's Best Games

The January **Electronic Games** showcased our nominations for the outstanding video, computer, portable, and multimedia games in a wide assortment of categories. The same issue also had a ballot so that America's gamers could vote for their favorites.

The response was overwhelming. And now that the voice of electronic gaming has spoken, let's salute the winners of the 1993 Electronic Games Awards!

Video Game of the Year

Street Fighter II (Capcom)



Honorable Mention:
Sonic 2 (Sega/Genesis)

Street Fighter II won a majority of the total vote, though about one-third of the respondents gave the nod to **Sonic 2**.

Computer Game of the Year

Wing Commander II (Origin Systems)

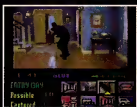


Honorable Mention:
Indiana Jones & the Fate of Atlantis (LucasArts)

Origin's high flyer shot down everything and just managed to whip Indy.

Multimedia Game of the Year

Night Trap (Sega)

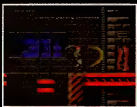


Honorable Mentions:
Dragon Slayer (TTI)
Loom (LucasArts)

Spectacular full-motion video graphics helped **Night Trap** pile up 50% of the votes. The other two finished in a virtual tie.

Portable Game of the Year

Shinobi 2 (Sega)



Honorable Mention:
Star Wars (Capcom)
The martial arts title had double the votes of any other nominee, showing that there's a lot of life left in its star character. Star Wars was also an excellent portable game.

Best Action Video Game

Street Fighter II (Capcom)



In the most lopsided victory in the competition, the fighting game chopped the rest of the competition down to size. No other entry even came close!

Best Action/Action Strategy Computer Game

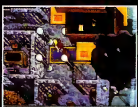
Spear of Destiny (Id Software)



Honorable Mention:
Super Space Invaders (Domark)
The brilliant first-person interface of the World War II shooter won out over outer space heroics by a wide margin.

Best Adventure/RPG Computer Game

Ultima VII (Origin Systems)



Honorable Mention:
Indiana Jones & the Fate of Atlantis (LucasArts)

Lord British's newest earned praise from most gamers, though a sizable minority preferred the color, excitement, and ease of play of the runner-up.

Best Adventure/ RPG Video Game

Final Fantasy Mystic Quest
(Square Soft)



Honorable Mention:
Equinox (Sony)
The first *Final Fantasy* adventure earned victory

in a tight contest, despite slightly less action than most adventure carts.

Best Sports Video Game

John Madden Football '93
(Electronic Arts)



Honorable Mention:
NHLPA Hockey '93
(Electronic Arts)
Some *EG* editors called

this the biggest upset, but *Madden* is certainly the best action-strategy football cartridge.

Best Sports Computer Game

John Madden II (Electronic Arts)



Honorable Mention:
4-D Boxing
(Electronic Arts)

This is one of the greatest comebacks in the history of sports gaming. The original computer title got no respect, but this one takes first.

Best Strategy Computer Game

Civilization (MicroProse)



Honorable Mention:
SimAnt (Maxis)
Sid Meier's design has "instant classic" written

all over it, though Maxis' interactive ant farm finished a strong second. The winner allowed gamers to create a complete civilization, including governments and new cities.

Best Action Strategy/ Strategy Video Game

Desert Strike (Electronic Arts)



Honorable Mention:
Rampart
(Electronic Arts)

Fierce combat action and a dab of strategy made this game, drawn from the Desert Storm conflict, as successful as the actual military campaign. A strategy gamer's dream!

Best Electronic Game Graphics

Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (Sega)



The world's best-known hedgehog sped miles ahead of its rivals. The speed, animation, and

special sequences translated into an easy victory. This, along with *Street Fighter II*, gave game players of the two major systems some of the most enjoyable and entertaining title to date. One can only wonder what the future holds for Sonic.

Best Electronic Game Sound

Willy Beamish (Sierra On-Line)



Honorable Mention:
Space MegaForce
(Toho)

Any of the nominees would've won in previous years, but the musical score and well-acted characters of *Willy Beamish* put it on top.

Most Humorous Electronic Game

Death Valley Rally (Sunsoft)



Honorable Mention:
Willy Beamish
(Sierra On-Line)
The adventurous young

boy almost outraced the Roadrunner. The cartoon antics went over big.

Best Science Fiction or Fantasy Electronic Game

Super Star Wars (JVC-Lucas Arts)



Honorable Mention:
Wing Commander II
(Origin Systems)
The George Lucas space

epic still thrills 'em on the game screen.

Best Fanzine

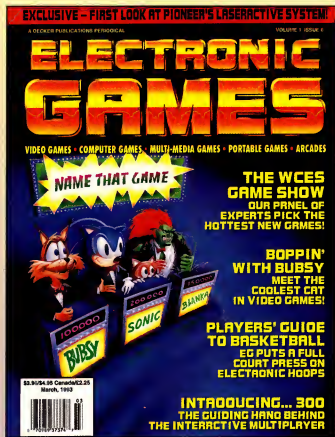
Computer Gaming Update

Honorable Mention

Digital Press

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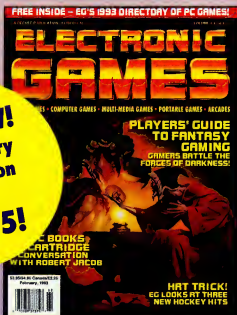
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EG'S GUIDE TO SEGA





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and had an I.Q. less than

thing about it is the games. And by now there are 75 of them available. Like Sonic The Hedgehog 2,™ Taz-Mania,™ Streets of Rage,™ Shinobi 2,™ and

twelve

Batman™ Returns. But don't think we're going to stop there. After we take a few minutes to catch our breath, it's back to the drawing board, designing new

then you wouldn't care which

games, and making sure Game Gear remains the number one color portable, which should be no problem considering the competition.

portable you had.

(Of course you wouldn't care if you drank from the toilet either.)





by Arnie Katz

Americans admire a wire-to-wire winner, whether it's Bill Clinton or Secretariat. Competitors who steamroll all opposition seldom fail to inspire awe.

But the people give their love to come-from-behind victors. From Harry Truman in the 1948 election to the hero of the *Rocky* movies, the greatest executed is reserved for comeback winners.

Today, Sega's Genesis and Nintendo's SNES are in a virtual tie for 16-Bit video console leadership. This represents one of the most amazing turn-arounds in the history of electronic gaming, since Sega was a distant number two during the famous 8 Bit era.

Nintendo revived the comatose video game field in the late 1980s, and it reaped its reward in the form of a market share estimated as high as 90%. There were 25 NES units for every Sega Master System.

The SMS had superior technology. It had better graphics and executed animation faster. But even that advantage couldn't slow down the Nintendo juggernaut. Nintendo's outstanding roster of



The Last Battle's great game play helped launch the Genesis into stardom.

cartridges and brilliant advertising campaigns made Mario more familiar to kids than the Smurfs.

The dawn of the new decade found Sega at a crossroads. It could accept a second-place standing, or it could rethink its product and marketing assumptions. Under the presidencies of Michael Katz and current incumbent Thomas Kalinske, Sega decided to start fresh with its new 16-Bit machine.

As many industry analysts have said, software sells hardware. Sega counted on a one-year head start over the SNES, but it also realized that this lead could melt away overnight. The key to long-term success, Sega executives decided, is to translate the hardware advantage into superior software. The 16-Bit technology allowed Genesis to present games that were more colorful, had backgrounds with greater detail, and moved faster than anything previously available.

The decision to stress data processing speed over sheer memory size has proven beneficial to both Sega and Genesis gamers. Blast processing, touted in commercials last Christmas, helps Genesis developers accomplish more with less memory than is possible on other systems. Since Genesis games generally require fewer extra chips, prices average lower than for comparable carts for other platforms.

The real question: How could Sega best capitalize on these important hardware advantages?

The Sega surge started with a detailed study of player demographics and tastes. The company found two areas in which it felt it could improve over Nintendo:

1. Nintendo targeted the youngest gamers, ages 8-12. Sega's research showed that the Genesis' audiovisual and game play capabilities were attracting older gamers as well as young ones;
2. Many gamers thought that side-

scrollers were becoming a bit overdone. Low replayability and high difficulty made cartridges that depend on a "conquer the game" mindset appeal less to older players. Their hand-eye coordination often is not good enough to reach the victory screen, and the low replayability made them vulnerable to inroads from the cartridge rental stores.

As a result, Sega has emphasized diversity of subject, genre, and play-action in its Genesis cartridges. Side-scrollers and other formats dear to the top scorers are definitely in the mix, but the Genesis catalog offers plenty of sports and strategy, too.

Sega has assigned a more important role to third-party publishers than in the past. One change is that virtually all SMS games carried the Sega brand name,



Phantasy Star 2 was one of the first and best RPG games made for the Genesis.

even those developed by independent publishers. Some less knowledgeable gamers may have misinterpreted this to mean that many companies supported the NES, while only one backed the Genesis.

Sega made sure that this mistake didn't happen twice. Genesis titles bear the imprints of most of the world's top video game publishers.

THE GENESIS STORY

SEGA'S ROCKY ROAD TO SUCCESS



That may seem like a cosmetic change. It is, at least in part, but it also reflects the greater prominence of third-party game-makers in the vast Genesis universe.

Although Sega itself has produced a library of outstanding games, Electronic Arts, Capcom, Data East and Flying Edge have also contributed many fine entries. Having multiple labels on store shelves.



The use of magic and weapons made the side-scrolling *Mystic Defender* a hit.

boosts quality by sharpening the rivalry among the third-party outfits. The consumer also benefits, says Sega, from the increased selection. When companies launch products in the same category, like **John Madden** and **Joe Montana**, gamers vote with their wallets to pick the top cartridge.

Another part of Sega's plan was the quest for a lead character. Licenses dominate video gaming, but some of the best sellers are based on wholly original

concepts. Sega had watched its arch-rival's brilliant use of Mario in games and then in other media, and company officials became convinced that they, too, needed a mascot.

Early tries included **Alex Kidd** and **Shinobi**. Both enjoyed some popularity, but neither held up title after title the way Mario and Luigi have.

Sega found its star in Sonic the Hedgehog. The speedster's antics revitalized the side-scroller category. Data compression permitted **Sonic the Hedgehog** to offer intricate, multi-layered graphics for impressive parallax effects and lots of levels without sacrificing either quantity or quality.

The Genesis Today

The most exciting 1992 Genesis innovation was Sega CD. Games for the add-on, like **Sewer Shark** and **Night Trap**, gave players a glimpse at the multimedia revolution that will transform electronic gaming in the 1990s. The coming year will see a lot more third-party support for Sega CD. As **EG's** Spring-Summer Preview predicted, it looks like almost every multimedia publisher is taking aim at this rapidly expanding market.

The next piece of game-enhancing hardware will be the Virtual Reality peripheral that Sega showed behind closed doors last Janu-

ary. The headpiece literally puts the images in the gamer's face. Working in conjunction with the Activator, this sys-



tem could produce the most sophisticated version of Virtual Reality for the home.

Not all of Sega's changes are as tangible and visible as new peripherals. One may be more important than any add-on. Game development, once the exclusive province of Sega of Japan, is gradually moving stateside. In the coming year, 70% of new Genesis cartridges will be designed in the U.S.

This strategy allows Sega to get the best of the Japanese product while insuring a lot of games have that unmistakable American feel. U.S. developers aren't necessarily more talented designers and programmers than their colleagues across the Pacific, but they do have a better understanding of our popular culture and the desires of this country's players. To show how serious it is about fostering more U.S. cartridge creation, Sega has decided to produce **Sonic the Hedgehog III** here instead of in the Far East.

It is undeniable that Sega has carved a sturdy niche in the electronic gaming industry. New advertising angles assure future growth. On the following pages of this special section, you'll find a guide to games and accessories. It covers the all-time greatest Genesis, Game Gear, and Sega CD games, plus the most important peripherals. To get the most out of your Sega gaming, read on!





SEGA ACCESSORIES

BRINGING MORE EXCITEMENT TO THE GENESIS

Ever since the first video game systems found their way onto the shelves of department stores, the public decided that these were pretty interesting devices. They were capable of captivating, entertaining, and balancing out the uneven leg on the kitchen table. However, there were those who wanted something more.

The earliest devices were usually light guns and extra controllers. Steering wheels, aerobic-jumping mats, gloves, more light guns and the occasional unknown peripheral that would sit on the shelves of Toys 'R Us for so long, archeological expeditions would be formed to uncover their true significance.



The Menacer allows gamers to feel the intense thrill of shoot-em-up games.

Sega has always committed themselves to making peripherals that were better than those offered by other companies. For their 8-Bit master system, along with the obligatory light gun, Sega released some special 3-D glasses. These were not made of blue and red plastic and cardboard, that one would find in a comic book. Instead, they employed a very sophisticated electronic shutter system that worked in conjunction with the machine to produce an excellent true 3-D image. While there was not as much support for these as people would have appreciated, the 3-D glasses displayed exactly how good an accessory could be.

Now that Sega is well into the 16-Bit market, there are some very exciting new peripherals for the Genesis. Sega has been striving to go beyond the usual and give the public something more. Indeed, they may have figured it out.

Menacer

The first true peripheral for the Genesis is the Menacer. Sega has worked to bring the light gun up to date, and pack the unit with enough features to give players a real reason to take aim.

The unit itself consists of several parts that fit together, giving the player several options on how the unit looks and feels. The base unit is a pistol, with no sights. A rifle stock and monocular or binocular sights can be added. There is a forward-mounted firing button on the grip, and another button where the trigger of the gun would be. The Menacer was clearly designed for comfort and with long play periods in mind.

The games for the Menacer have not been coming as fast as those who purchased the machine would have hoped. The unit comes with a six-in-one game cart, and some units also have the arcade smash **Terminator 2** included as an extra incentive. The six-in-one cart is mediocre at best, but the version of **T2** is incredible—just like the arcade.

If Sega continues to support the development of games, the Menacer could turn out to be a big success.

Activator

The next big arrival from Sega will be the Activator, a circular device the player stands in to use. Beams of light emit from the base on the floor, and when the player breaks the beam, it registers as

actual movement on the video screen.

This is especially effective for fighting games, where players can execute different kicks and punches in the air, and watch the on-screen characters react accordingly.

The Activator will be available in the spring of '93, and will come with a game



and a cartridge to make music—sort of like an activator synthesizer.

Virtual Reality

The latest idea to come from Sega is possibly the most exciting ever for a home video game system.

In the fall of 1993, Sega will release the first home Virtual Reality peripheral. The accessory will most likely consist of a helmet, with some sort of shutter device similar to the 3-D glasses, and possibly some sort of glove. It will also probably have speakers in the helmet for closed-in stereo sound.

While Sega hasn't showed the device yet, and the particulars are as much based in speculation as in reality, one thing remains certain. Virtual Reality will prove to be the next step in bringing the player deeper into the game and enhancing the play experience.

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SEGA CDS

FIVE KNOCKOUT GAMES FOR THE NEWEST SYSTEM

The Sega CD was released last fall, to the pleasure of happy gamers across the country. This system brings with it the promise of improved graphics, sound, and animation, with a bevy of special effects that would make even the most demanding gamer's head spin.

While there hasn't exactly been a flood of games for this new system, the games that are released are interesting and show off the power of this new system. Emphasis has been placed on the Sega CD's ability to handle full-motion video, making the games play less game-like and more like a movie.

This list shows some of the first releases for the Sega CD, and while these may not be the best games in the world, they are certainly revolutionary and excellent in their own way.



Night Trap (Sega) - For anyone who has ever loved "B" movies, **Night Trap** is a dream come true. Dana Plato, star of the old TV show *Different Strokes*, is the star of this "vampire aliens terrorize" story. The player must go from room to room in the house, springing traps on the aliens and protecting the scantily-clad females who are there to visit for the weekend. The game is so large that it comes on two CDs, and it takes a lot of exploring and note taking to make it all the way through the game. Needless to say, it is easy to get distracted in the house when there is so much going on in every room. While being very strange, **Night Trap** is well worth giving a try.



Cobra Command (Sega) - This seldom seen arcade game has been resurrected for the Sega CD. While there isn't much in the way of play mechanics, it is still a highly enjoyable game. The player is in command of a high-speed attack helicopter flying through city streets and other locations while your commander shouts orders at you. If you don't hit the direction pad or fire when the voice tells you to, it means certain death. While the graphics aren't as smooth as the LaserDisc in the arcade, they are still well drawn and animated.



Willie Beamish (Sierra) - **Willie Beamish** is a direct translation of the MS-DOS CD version. The player must help Willie get to the Nintari championships. There are many trials along the way and puzzles for Willie to solve.

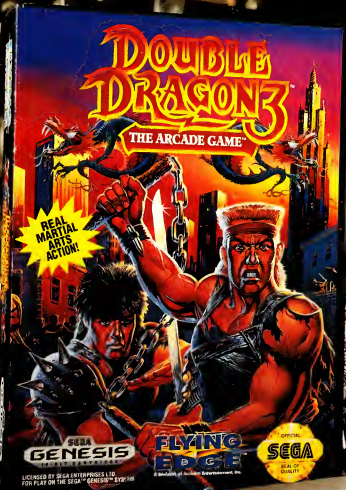
The best feature in this game is the absence of written text. Instead, all of the characters' lines, and even the descriptions of objects, are spoken by professional actors.



Wonder Dog (JVC) - The adorable puppy from plant K-9 comes to Earth and the Sega CD with a crash. Empowered with the ability to throw stars and a winged hovering helmet, he is here to fight his way back to his home planet. In the classic Superman style, he was ejected to Earth to be spared from the wrath of the ravage Pitbulls that invaded his planet. Now the canine hero must battle through levels full of crazy cats and wild dogs to get back to the final confrontation on K-9. Filled with tons of bonus rooms and hidden ledges, this one will make you howl.



Road Avenger (Renovation) - After your wife was killed by a gang of thugs you hop in your turbo-charged car and burn up the roads in search of revenge. This game features smooth scrolling with no interruptions during the level. The graphics are done in the style reminiscent of Japanese animations with all the flair and detail that make them so popular. There are nine levels of driving action that flows more like a movie than simply a game. Grab a good grip on the control, because the animated ride gets intense with the computer advising you, or, for the daring, no help at all. The reaction time gets critical as the action and levels start to rise. It will take a keen eye and quick reflexes to rescue your wife.



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SEGA GENESIS
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By the Editors of **Electronic Games**

Bill Gates can afford all the games. The founder of Microsoft and reportedly the richest man in the U.S. could buy every cartridge ever produced for the Genesis with pocket change.

This article is for the rest of us. The editors of **Electronic Games** have pooled their experience for this salute to the 20 games that belong in every Genesis collection.

There are plenty of great games that didn't make our list, some because they weren't released before the February 10th cut-off. These are the ones we want to play, and play again.

Desert Strike (Electronic Arts). Pilot an Apache combat helicopter over the hot spots of the Middle East in a game as timely as today's headlines. Destroy communications, wipe out enemy airfields, seal up bleeding oil pipelines, and rescue stranded allies in this beautifully realized arcade-strategy contest. A compelling angled topdown viewpoint and a great interface make **Desert Strike** a real high-octane kick to play.



Can you relive the battle strategy used during the Gulf War in **Desert Strike**?

Ecco the Dolphin (Sega). Scientific accuracy doesn't get in the way of the entertainment in this lovely, yet challeng-

ing action-adventure. **Ecco the dolphin** searches the seas to find the source of a mysterious storm that swept away his finny friends. The interface is so intuitive, and the action so fluid, that even a usually humdrum activity, like movement, becomes a unique play experience.

Global Gladiators (Virgin). Although a commercial failure, this is a major cult favorite within the Genesis subculture, winning numerous awards and devoted fans. Ostensibly tied in with McDonald's, there are few, if any, signs of hamburger-related activity in this side-scroller. Its queasy colors and gross-out graphics helped make this a favorite of both the young and young-at-heart.



The **Global Gladiators** are out to stop environmental disasters everywhere!

John Madden Football '93 (Electronic Arts). Someday, after technology makes another leap, there'll be a better gridiron cartridge, but this is today's undisputed champ. Realistically animated teams play on the angled, vertically scrolling playfield. There's a satisfying choice of plays for offense and defense, and you don't have to be Bill Walsh to learn how to use them.

NHLPA Hockey (Electronic Arts). Hockey hasn't proven an easy game to simu-

late properly, but Electronic Arts' series accurately presents professional rink action for one or two players. The newest upgrade employs the vertically scrolling playfield introduced three years ago and improves the already outstanding graphics and animation of the skaters.

PGA Tour Golf II (Electronic Arts). Polygames, the developer, made even an already good simulation even better in



Fore! **PGA Tour Golf 2** is a major hit with duffers on the Sega Genesis.

this upgrade of the one-to-four player contest. Swingers can practice, play a tournament, or compete in the skins game. A stat-oriented option lets you sit back and watch the pros do it! Superb terrain graphics and point-and-click control make this as smooth-playing as it is realistic.

Revenge of Shinobi (Sega). An early release for the Genesis, this is still the finest Shinobi game ever produced for a home system. Splendid graphics, fluid animation, and a perfect play system make this side-scrolling ninja game truly



As a powerful ninja, you must defeat evil forces in **Revenge of Shinobi**.

THE ESSENTIAL GENESIS: THE TOP 20 CARTRIDGES

THESE ARE THE "Must Buys"



compelling. Master ninja Musashi must track the evil Neo Zed through 24 levels, armed with a sword, crossed daggers and Ninja Magic.

Road Rash II (Electronic Arts). The ultimate in skull-pounding motorcycle combat racing! Compete against 14 of the toughest bikers ever permitted on a ROM cartridge, and make sure to grab a club—or better still, a chain—whenever possible. Then compete head-to-head against another player in the well-executed split-screen mode. Totally, like, awesome.



Road Rash 2 is definitely not one of your average Sunday afternoon drives!

Side Pocket (Data East). This electronic billiards title isn't the typical cartridge classic. It makes up for its lack of action and video pyrotechnics with accurate simulation and exciting competition. You can pick any of eight machine-directed players for solitaire sessions. The top-down view and accurate ball physics combine with a simple control system for high playability. If you think you can clear the table, be sure to pick this one up.



Advanced fighting moves and increased challenge highlight **Streets of Rage II**.



Strider has to make good use of his super-sword to save the human race.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (Sega). The popular character is even faster this time, and he's not alone. Helping in the struggle against Dr. Robotnik is Tails, Sonic's two-tailed sidekick. The solo gamer guides Sonic and Tails faithfully, but you can also play cooperatively, with each player running one of the heroes. More levels and even slicker graphics make this a worthy sequel to the landmark hit.



T2 puts you in a post-nuclear holocaust, battling Skynet's mechanical minions.

Streets of Rage II (Sega). When the syndicate strikes back by capturing Adam Hunter, Axel Stone and Blaze Fielding must save their friend and stop the crooks. New allies are Max the wrestler and Ada's younger brother, Skate. This combat epic balances action and strategy, with a head-to-head mode that's ideal for competition and practice.

Strider (Sega). This coin-op adaptation represented the pinnacle of Genesis programming at the time of its release, and **Strider** has lost very little in the interim. A lone fighter, armed with a slashing

super-sword, must save the Earth from an alien invasion in this side-scroller, which makes excellent visual use of minarets and other classic Russian architecture for its backgrounds.

Terminator 2: The Arcade Game (Arena). This hot shooter, based on the two Schwarzenegger movies, plays best with the Menacer, but it's still exciting with a regular controller. It offers two missions in which the T-800 protects John Connor against Skynet and prevents the development of the renegade defense system. Enemies abound, including the shape-shifting T-1000.



Toejam and Earl await your help to reassemble their funky space stereo.

Toejam & Earl (Sega). Science fiction takes a ribbing in this one- or two-player action-adventure about two hip-hop aliens who must reassemble their space-going stereo after crash landing. Side-splitting animation and bizarre enemies provide laughs as well as thrills. The cleverness of this multi-level contest has made it especially popular among adult gamers, who, as when watching the old Warner Brothers cartoons, realize the blatant sarcasm and biting humor.

Tommy Lasorda Baseball (Sega). One of the very first releases for the Genesis, it remains the system's best available arcade-style baseball game. There are no real players, and statistics are given short shrift, with only batting average and home run totals listed, but the action itself is fantastic. Smooth graphics and realistic game mechanics add to the playability. Behind-the-plate and top-down views combine to create a tremendously enjoyable hardball recreation.



It took the Game Gear a while to build momentum, but this full-color, hand-held cartridge-based system has finally begun to generate significant interest among both consumers and third-party developers. Sega now regularly produces diminutive versions of its leading Genesis titles, from **Sonic the Hedgehog** to **Ecco the Dolphin**, buttressed by strong GG software from outside publishers such as Arena, Virgin and U.S. Gold.

Axe Battler (Sega). This is basically the GG version of Sega's popular coin-op and Genesis entry, **Golden Axe**. Go forth and whomp on a variety of magical monsters in this classic side-scroller with power-ups and bosses. Slick play and sterling visuals really keep the action swinging along.



Incredible baseball action-on-the-go is here in **The Majors: Pro Baseball**.

Columns (Sega). A kinetic puzzle contest in the **Tetris** tradition, **Columns** blends solid game play and appealing visuals. Player-selectable objects, from jewels to fruit, fall from the top of the screen and must be stacked in piles of three according to type. Once it gets going, **Columns** has a tendency to play itself, but it's still an essential entry in the GG Library.

Dragon Crystal (Sega). **Dragon Crystal**, the GG version of the Genesis game **Fatal Labyrinth**, offers an ideal blend of action and adventure through four kingdoms and 30 worlds full of magical items and monstrous enemies. Chop through trees, flowers and other obstacles in this trailblazing maze quest containing elements from the **Gauntlet** and **Apsah** games.

THE ESSENTIAL GAME GEAR LIBRARY: THE TOP 10 CARTRIDGES

The Land of Illusion — starring **Mickey Mouse** (Sega). **Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion** comes to the Game Gear in this enchanting side-scroller pitting Mickey against a wicked witch and gaming's most eclectic kingdom in an effort to rescue his main squeeze from a tower prison. The visuals are striking and the play action is smooth in this delightful, interactive cartoon contest.

The Majors: Pro Baseball (Sega). One of the first releases compatible with Sega's new Gear-to-Gear two-player cable converter, **The Majors: Pro Baseball** is a first-rate baseball simulation. Solid graphics, real major league players, offensive and defensive stats, and the ability to draft your personal dream team are among the features which make this game a must-have for baseball fans.

Prince of Persia (Tengen). This classic action-strategy contest from Jordan Mechner, creator of **Karateka**, thrives in the reduced space of the GG environment. Beautiful character animation and expert design help propel this puzzle-oriented program with an *Arabian Nights* ambience. Move through a series of elaborate, multi-tiered scenarios seen from an angled side perspective in order to—what else?—rescue the princess!

Shinobi (Sega). An early entry for the GG, **Shinobi** has good graphics, great



Fighting and weaponry skills are the keys to survival in the portable **Shinobi**.

game play and an irresistible hook: rescue four color-coded ninjas, each with his own distinct power, then toggle among them as this side-scroller progresses. Action ranges from a highway chase, with characters scrambling over the tops of cars and trucks, to a frenetic punch-out at a construction site.



Everyone's favorite hedgehog rolls right along with the same familiar game play.

Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega). This is the game that turned the Game Gear around. Control the world's most famous hedgehog as he zips along roadways and loop-de-loops, collecting golden rings and power-ups as he goes.

Sonic 2 (Sega). **Sonic 2** is much more difficult than the GG original, and players will miss *Tails*, but this game still has a lot going for it. The neatest feature is Sonic's ability to smash through walls, but he can also ride railcars, hang glide, and float underwater.

Super Space Invaders (Domark). One of the landmarks of electronic gaming still shines in this impressive GG revamp. Experience the entire range of possibilities—including the all-important *Cattle Mutilation Round*—inherent in the **Space Invaders** format. Control a horizontally-movable cannon protecting the Earth from columns of evil aliens journeying relentlessly downscreen.

JAMES BOND

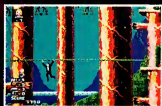
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Pacific Theater of Operations (Koel) - Take charge of naval forces in the Pacific, during World War II. This game features a much more intelligent interface than any other military simulation marketed for console game systems. And for those who complained that Koel's previous games, like **Romance of the Three Kingdoms II**, were too easy to beat, Koel assures us that this game will have record-setting longevity.

Romance II too easy to beat? I bet these guys do their own taxes too.

Rocket Knight Adventures (Konami/Genesis) - Everyone wants to win the world over by creating an appealing character everyone can love, adore, and spend money purchasing various licensed products bearing the character's likeness. Konami's latest character is the **Rocket Knight**. Rocket is some sort of rodent (my guess is an opossum) armed with a sword and jet-pack. Tons of great graphics and amusing animation, makes this one of the premier side-scrollers of the year.

Between **Sonic, Spot,** and **Rocket Knight**, gamers will have their fair share of cute, marketable characters to support.

Blaster Master 2 (Sunsoft/Genesis) - **Blaster Master** was made popular about three years ago, on the 8-Bit Nintendo system. Now Sunsoft has brought the long awaited sequel to the 16-Bit Genesis. All of the action and game play from the original have been left intact.



The long awaited sequel to the 8-Bit hit, **Blaster Master**, is finally on its way.

Strider 2 (U.S. Gold/Genesis) - Another long awaited sequel is finally making its way to the Genesis. Strider is back to face the forces of evil once again. Featuring awesome graphics and sounds, this is one game that should leap off of store shelves.



Released in Europe for computers over a year ago, **Strider 2** is finally coming!

Sega CD

While there was not as many new Sega CD games being shown at the WCES as many would have liked, there were some quality titles announced. Along with **Mortal Kombat** (see Genesis listing), Flying Edge announced that their first CD title will be using their **WWF** license for a completely original game.

Sony, another early supporter of the system, also announced some major licenses. They will be making games from both **Cliffhanger**, Sylvester Stallone's new movie, and **Last Action Hero**, the latest action flick for the indomitable Arnold Schwarzenegger.

On the down side, there is some doubt as to when Sierra's announced list of games will show up. It seems that there are some conversion problems.

Here are a few of the Sega CD games that were on display at the show, though there will surely be many more debuting at the Summer CES, and maybe even a few surprises along the way.

Dark Wizard (Sega/Sega CD) - This epic role-playing game from Sega features four different styles of game play, depending on which character you decide to become. While the version that was being showed was still in Japanese, it is apparent that this will be one of the longest and most involved RPGs ever released.



Dark Wizard will offer several styles of game play dependant on the character.

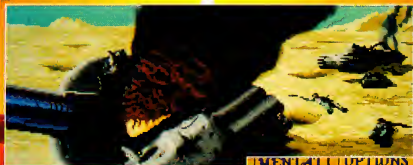
Batman Returns (Sega/Sega CD) - This is possibly the most eagerly awaited game for the system. The game has been enhanced with footage from the movie as well as the incredible sound track. Hopefully this game will have made it to store shelves by the time you read this.

Joe Montana NFL Football (Sega/Sega CD) - Another Sega CD game that was expected much earlier. The programmers took their time with this one. This will be the first Sega CD to feature all of the nifty scaling and rotation effects made possible with the system's hardware. Add the digitized voice and great music and this game will surely be a hit.

Terminator (Virgin/Sega CD) - For everyone who thought that the cartridge version of **Terminator** was good... look out! Virgin decided that it wasn't good enough and went back to the drawing board with this one. The Sega CD version of **Terminator** will be all-new and faster than ever. With scenes from the movie and music in full Surround Sound, this will be one game to reckon with. By the time Virgin gets through with this one, even John Connor will be impressed.

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With all of the hoopla on who has more games for their system, and which generation of software the companies are working on, it is easy to lose sight of the point that really matters.

Whether or not there is a continued support of the machine by game companies. With Sega, the support by third-party companies has only been increasing since the Genesis was introduced.

Here is a partial listing of some of the games that we at **EG** feel are particularly exciting. This by no means represents a complete list and we are sure that there will be many more great titles coming your way this year.

Mortal Kombat (Flying Edge/Genesis & Sega CD) - This is probably the most exciting license this year. While Capcom still has not confirmed the rumor of **Street Fighter II** making its way onto any of Sega's systems, this game will give fighting fans plenty of the action they have been demanding. The versions on the Genesis will hopefully keep the integrity of the arcade game intact, including the ultra-gory "kill" moves.

Cyborg Justice (Sega/Genesis) - This is another fighting game, featuring customizable robots to beat the other guys robot senseless. Grab the right weapons and blow your opponent to the scrap heap.

Shining Force (Sega/Genesis) - The sequel to **Shining in the Darkness**. This game features more memory, and

an improved user interface. Don't expect another underground dungeon crawler, this game is more like a traditional RPG, with some strategy elements mixed in for good measure. The battles are even fought in real-time. A must for RPG fans!

Dinosaurs for Hire (Sega/Genesis) - This game is taken from the popular comic series by Malibu. You control the saurian-superheroes in this fast action side-scroller. Destroy the alien poachers from the future and protect the future of the dinosaurs.

Rolling Thunder 3 (Namco/Genesis) - Once again, terrorists are threatening the safety of the world and it is up to you to save it. This game is short on story but full of action, giving the player the chance to work off all of the frustration built up after a long day at the office, by pulling a video gun and killing more bad guys than you could count. Violent? Sure, but not much more than the six o'clock news.

Splatterhouse 3 (Namco/Genesis) - In keeping with the gory theme of the original two games, **Splatterhouse 3** allows players to once again slide on the old hockey mask, grab a weapon, and beat all kinds of hideous monsters until they resemble puddles of multi-hued green gelatin. These are not games for the faint hearted or the weak stomached.



One more time, this Jason wannabe must play the horror-hero to save his girl.

Haunting (Electronic Arts/Genesis) - For another sort of horror-movie-gone-video-game, EA offers this 3/4 perspective action game. This game is more humorous than the **Splatterhouse** games, and also employs more adventure elements. The character must search through the house for clues, and keep a close eye out for all of the evil creatures lurking about.



Players who have tired of side-scrollers should give **Cool Spot** a try.

Cool Spot (Sega/Virgin/Genesis) - This game was programmed by Virgin games and is being distributed by Sega. The reason for this is simple: Virgin made such a good game, Sega felt that it was worth a much wider distribution that Virgin is capable of.

In this game, Spot - the red dot from the side of the 7-up bottle - is setting out on an adventure of huge proportions. It is difficult for a spot to get around these days, and our Spot must keep his wits about him and use whatever methods are available to him. The graphics in this game are state of the art, and so is the animation. Will all of this going for it, **Cool Spot** could end up as one of the biggest hits of the year.

Elemental Master (Renovation/Sega) - This game is not an adventure or RPG as the title might suggest, but instead is one of the fastest and most furious shooters to come out in a long time. Designed by the same team that was responsible for **Thunder Force III** and **Lightening Force**, **Elemental Master** is sure to appeal to any shooter fans out there. The use of a human character with magic for power-ups is a nice touch.



Elemental Master is one of the most exciting and original shooters in a while.

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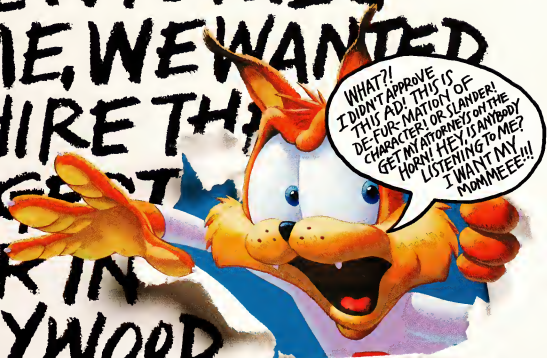
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AN AUDIENCE WITH LORD BRITISH

by Russ Ceccola

Veteran game designer Richard Garriott got his start in the computer game business early in his life. He convinced his teachers in high school to allow him to write short games for a special programming project and later used those games as the basis for

Akalabeth, the precursor to his line of **Ultima** adventure games. Now, his **Ultima** games are up to number 7 1/2, with multiple offshoots and video game conversions available in electronic games stores.

Garriott no longer takes personal charge of all elements of his games; each title requires a large team of specialists, with Garriott's role usually geared toward the creative end of the project.

For Garriott, 1992 was a great year. An appearance on *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, the success of his third Halloween adventure in Austin, TX, and the release of a variety of **Ultima** titles made the year's efforts worth every minute. He recently spoke to **Electronic Games** about the remaining titles of the current **Ultima** trilogy and his plans for the future.

Ultima VI: The False Prophet introduced the current look of the numbered **Ultima** games. They now take

place on the same scale throughout the adventure and sport a handy interface with logical object management and very few commands.

The third **Ultima** trilogy took a darker turn with **Ultima VII: The Black Gate**. Garriott acknowledges that the **Ultima VII-VIII-**

IX trilogy was the first set of games he planned out completely from the start. Unfortunately, "**Ultimas** always take 18 months. No

matter how much I've tried to make them faster, no matter how many resources I throw at them, it always takes that long," he laments.

The new tools used by Garriott's design team allowed separate groups to create their own worlds; then merge them into one larger game, thus allowing more creativity and added emphasis on individual designs. This new work method resulted in **The Forge of Virtue**, (the first add-in disk for computer RPGs) made by one set of **Ultima**

designers while another group put together the program engine for **Ultima VII: Pagan**.

The add-in disk for **Ultima VII** and the current title, **Ultima 7 1/2: Serpent Isle**, are both "grand experiments" for Garriott and Origin. The add-in disk offered new challenges within the same game structure and sold quite well. One more add-in disk is on the way for **Ultima VII**, and similar disks for future **Ultimas** are speculative. **Ultima 7 1/2** came to be because there was more story to tell in Britannia before the Avatar (the player's role in **Ultima** games) left to confront the game's evil being (the Guardian) in his homeworld in **Ultima VIII**. There will probably not be another half-numbered **Ultima** any time soon.

Pagan will be a much darker game than **The Black Gate**. In it, the Avatar must try to defeat the Guardian, his four elemental titans and their symbiotic followers on the Guardian's homeworld. The Guardian's ritualistic powers supercede the Avatar's magic and he must find other ways to succeed.

A mysterious group of people who are seemingly pagans appear in the game, but Garriott revealed that they are actually the heroes of the adventure. "I am not a religious individual at all. I am not an occultist either. I am an ethical hedonist, which is also, by design, the 'religion' of the good guys in **Pagan**," Garriott said.



Ultima VII was successful enough to warrant more adventures with add-ins.

Garriott had the boxes for the current trilogy planned out before design work commenced. He would like to depict a metallic pentagram rising above flames on **Pagan's** cover, but that depends on the response from the retailers.

"Any symbol written on a piece of paper is really meaningless. It's the interpretation of that symbol by people that matters. I know people will look at, for example, a pentagram and say that it's evil. It's precisely that kind of response that I enjoy invoking. As long

as I'm confident that what I'm doing is, in fact, not harmful, I enjoy soliciting those types of responses from those that are ignorant or unaware," he explained.

Ultima IX: Ascension will have an all-white, cloud-covered box with the logo in glass-like letters. **Ascension's** plot may turn some more heads, for the Avatar will achieve immortality and players will say goodbye to Britannia and hello to New Britannia with **Ultima X**.

While we're waiting for **Ultima X**, the 3-D dungeon aspects of the **Ultima** world will appear only in the **Ultima Underworld** games. The 2-D, orthogonal views will govern the numbered **Ultimas**. Garriott sees **Ultima X** as the perfect game to merge the technologies and create an entirely new 3-D world. "Early **Ultima** games had 3-D dungeons, 2-D outdoors, etc. They went away because it just wasn't practical to develop all three vantage points in one product—it's almost like three different games at once. Until 3-D technology catches up to the point where we can do all the things that we do in the orthogonal views in the dungeons, we have to continue both product lines. **Ultima X** will be the convergence point of the two technologies."

Garriott will also break away from the **Ultima** line with a science-fiction RPG called **Bounty Hunter** that will be "Ultima-esque in feel, but brand new in implementation, like **Ultima** meets *Star Wars*." **Bounty Hunter** and **Ultima X** will both be implemented by Origin's newest design tools and, most importantly, will be able to accept input from a variety of different hardware devices, possibly including the virtual reality controls of the future.

Virtual reality is a trendy buzz term, but Garriott has a much different approach. "Gloves and headsets take care of the sensory aspects of virtual reality. There is also the intellectual aspect of virtual reality, which involves defining a place as intellectually complete as one can imagine. The fun thing that's open to speculation is what can happen when you bring together the people who can handle the



physical aspects of the experience with those who can do the intellectual aspects correctly. That's what I want to do next." Garriott's version of virtual reality should be just as interesting as his **Ultima** world.

The Halloween adventures that Garriott transforms his house into every other October have vast commercial potential. One of his future goals is to adapt his adventures to a format where the masses can appreciate them. He recently ruled out travelling carnival-like (in trucks with a portable Britannia Manor) as impractical, but is confident that the recent merger of Origin with Electronic Arts will result in a place for people from all over the world to visit.

"EA has much stronger financial resources than we ever did alone. As a result, the merger has accelerated our concept timeline for moving into what we believe is the next form of entertainment. That has given me the freedom to think about what areas I personally might want to explore," he said. "Over the next three, five years, I want to evolve my personal capabilities to the level where I can have the confidence to take on a project of that scope."

Garriott looks forward to 1993 and beyond as years in which he brings his present and future dreams to reality. He remarked about his *Lifestyles* appearance that "it's real cool when, on those rare occasions outside of Austin, someone recognizes me and comes up and says hello."

The variety of **Ultima** games and other Origin projects from Garriott, coupled with his pleasant, friendly nature, serve as a strong foundation for the boundless imagination of one of gaming's finest visionaries.



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Outlander

Mindscape
SNES
1 Player

Gamers who've spent years of frustration waiting for some software publisher to pick up the rights to the classic sci-fi adventure film *Road Warrior* will be delighted. **Outlander** is the closest any video game has come to capturing the high intensity thrills of that classic film. Specifically, **Outlander** reproduces one of the film's great roadwar sequences with the player-character, who looks suspiciously like Mel Gibson in the game's closing graphic, driving a souped-up combat auto against an army of cycle-riding outlaws.

Even the game's storyline is strongly reminiscent of both *Mad Max* and *Road Warrior*: it's over a century since a nuclear holocaust poisoned the rivers, denuded the earth of plant life and wiped



Great cinematic sequences provide additional enhancements to Outlander.

out everything but a few breeds of livestock and a ragtag remnant of humanity. A scientist, however, has made a startling breakthrough, developing synthesized water in a laboratory. He is on his way to putting the world back on course when his plane is shot down over the Australian wastelands and he's captured by Duster, the madman who rules the desolate country.

The player is cast as a mercenary hired by the U.N. to get the scientist back and is equipped with a car that would make James Bond envious. It might not attract girls, but this baby is ready to rock and roll, with a front-mounted machine gun, heat-seeking missiles, and nitro power for bursts of speed.

The car appears on-screen, moving **Pole Position**-style into the horizon with left and right directional scrolling. Members of Duster's Army continually harass the player-character, occasionally pulling right up to the left or right window in order to generate more personalized violence. When a cyclist pulls up beside the p-c's car, a window appears

on-screen, showing a first-person view out the side window, with the p-c holding a sawed-off shotgun in his hand. Discharging the shotgun into the face of a leering enemy is definitely violent, but it is also one of the coolest effects ever produced in an electronic game.

Periodically, while driving down the gauntlet-like highway, the player hears a beeping sound. This indicates that a town is nearby and the p-c can pull over for some scavenging. The scavenging sequences use the tired side-scrolling play mechanic with the p-c forced to battle it out on foot while collecting necessary supplies. This is the weakest part of the game and most players will be chomping at the bit to get back on the road.

Outlander on the SNES doesn't quite match up to the Genesis version, which

is not only much faster but offers a superior, first-person view from inside the car rather than the external, behind-the-car perspective used on the SNES. Nonetheless, this is a hot game and the extra command buttons on the SNES definitely improve playability.

Outlander is one of the best car com-



bat games ever made, with the side-window shotgun scenes the game's stand-out feature. This is so good, Mindscape could have its biggest hit in years. Any fans of the *Mad Max* movies or those with a desire to crush bad drivers while travelling around town will probably take an instant liking to this ingenious game.

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	87%
Sound	86%
Playability	86%
OVERALL	
87%	

Tony LaRussa Baseball

EA Sports
Genesis
1-2 Players

Although almost half a dozen different baseball simulations have been produced for the Genesis, until the release of **Tony LaRussa Baseball**, the best all-around version of the national pastime on that system was Sega's own three-year old **Tommy LaSorda Baseball**. Fortunately this video game version of SSI's sophisticated computer simulation, **Tony LaRussa Ultimate Baseball**, ends the Genesis' prolonged batting slump.

Developed by Beyond Software, creators of the original computer version, **Tony LaRussa Baseball** is the most far-reaching hardball recreation ever attempted in a video game. This simulation employs real teams and players from the National and American Leagues, a richly-detailed statistical base, and multiple modes that cast the gamer as anyone from an on-the-field player or player/manager to a hot dog-munching spectator (hot dogs and popcorn not included).

In the arcade mode, there is a lot more offense and the game results may not perfectly match the performance statistics of the players and teams being simulated. The simulation mode offers a much more realistic game, with statistical results that generally match up favorably with the actual player models.

LaRussa Baseball can also be set so that the Genesis controls either one or both teams.



LaRussa will provide helpful scouting information on your upcoming games.

The game's visuals employ several viewpoints, from the stands behind home plate to a catcher's-eye view for batter-pitcher confrontations. The catcher's view is presented as a large, close-up window in the center of the screen, with first and third base views visible at the left and right edge of that window for

monitoring men on base. Once the ball is hit, the screen reverts to the original, grandstand view, with a spotlight tracking the position of the ball. Even on a high fly, when the ball itself is far above the

the speaker is partially underwater. There are also no cheers or boos when a run is scored, though a window does appear showing the on-deck hitter high-fiving the runner after he scores.



player's line of sight, simply moving the nearest fielder to the center of the spotlight allows him to make the catch. The use of the spotlight for fielding is one of the game's most successful design innovations.

Pitching and hitting are handled through an interesting interface device. When pitching, the gamer selects the type of pitch for his hurler to throw (fastball, curveball, slider, change-up) by moving the control pad in the indicated direction. A second click of the direction pad tells the pitcher where the ball should be aimed.

At the plate, the direction pad determines the type of swing the batter should take (normal, power, contact or bunt). There are also special commands for hit-and-runs, steals, pitch-outs, etc.

One of the game's neatest features is the simulation of bullpen activity. A simple command allows the player-manager to view his team's pitching stats, warn up one or two relievers, and see the status of his current pitcher, all on the same screen. There's even a visual representation of a shower stall, activated when a pitcher is taken out of the game, i.e., "sent to the showers."

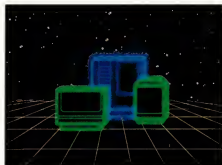
Tony LaRussa Baseball isn't perfect, of course. The speech is often unclear, producing a gurgling sound that suggests

But the game's most serious problem is the number of frame animations used in the pitcher-batter sequences. Rather than moving smoothly from the pitcher's hand to the batter's box, the ball advances in a jerky fashion. This choppy animation results in some visual curiosities, such as the ability of batters to hit a ball that has already passed them, especially in the arcade mode.

Problems aside, however, whether you're a stat maven or a fan of arcade-style pitch 'em and hit 'em games, **Tony LaRussa Baseball** quite simply offers the best baseball action available in the 16-Bit universe. Although there have been a large number of baseball simulations created for the Sega Genesis system, this one appears to be one of the better ones to date. It will certainly provide hours of baseball-bashing entertainment.

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	72%
Playability	93%
OVERALL	
86%	



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

The Incredible Crash Dummies

Acclaim/LJN
NES
1-2 Players

The protesters who spent months complaining that the Crash Dummies' toy licensing defeats the purpose of the original Public Safety campaign will be pleased to learn that **The Incredible Crash Dummies** spends the opening segment spelling out the seat belt message.

Unfortunately, the game thereafter ignores everything the Crash Dummies represent.

The Incredible Crash Dummies' storyline revolves around the Dummies' enemy, Junkman, who has kidnapped three of their friends: Spare Tire, Daryl and Bumper.

The player-dummy moves in standard side-scrolling perspective, seeking out



The dummies have to use their heads if they want to beat the tough puzzles.

extra weapons and spare dummy body parts to defeat Junkman. The player must guide the Dummies through four main levels of action: the crash test center, inside the Big Top, down at the docks, and, finally, the junkyard.

After completing the crash test center scenario, with no tangible rewards, the dummy must stumble through a sewer to free Bumper. On the second level, there

are highwires and trampolines to navigate to pass the circus tent and advance to the fun house. There is no rescue on this level, but it does lead the dummy to the docks. The third level begins in the dockside container yard and requires the player to navigate the dummy under a pier and through a warehouse, leading to Daryl's rescue. The junkyard sequence begins in the wrecking yard, and winds its way to Junkman's lair where the villain and his final captive, Spare Tire, await.

The Incredible Crash Dummies' graphics are good for an 8-Bit machine. The color pallet uses a comic book style of bright hues with a heavy outline. The settings are not dark and ominous, but bright with occasional fluorescent overtones.

The scrolling message reminding players to buckle their safety belts has some



shadow, but it doesn't detract from the presentation. The background music is not distracting, which is a plus as there is no option screen to turn it off, yet it does not stand out as a recognizable theme.

The most shocking thing about this game is the total lack of any driving or actual crash scenarios. Actually, other than some Junkbots, the fishing boat props on level three and the nutcycle that Spin rides, no vehicles even exist in the game. This defeats the whole point of licensing the Crash Dummies. This side-scroller would be just as effective with anyone from Yogi Bear to Popeye in the starring roles.

The game play becomes frustrating when the dummy bumps into an enemy. Not only does this lose a life point, but it



An informative status bar helps gamers get through some of the tough areas.

also sends the player whirling back to either the beginning of the saved section or to the fringe of another trap which inevitably loses another life point.

The Exhaust Gun, the Dummies' primary offensive weapon, not only has a very short range but its effect on the

Junkbots is limited at best. Another shortcoming is the game's response time. There appeared to be a significant delay between the control pad jump command and the actual on-screen leap, enough time for Junkman's traps to spring into effect.

The sight of a dummy losing its head is disconcerting, and it makes directional play more difficult.

The two-player option neither permits cooperative play nor encourages head-to-head play, as the players merely alternate turns.

The Incredible Crash Dummies fails to capture the appeal of the commercials that made them famous. The overall contest is a multi-car collision with no survivors.

— Laurie Yates

RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	75%
Sound	75%
Playability	60%
OVERALL	
65%	

B.O.B.

Electronic Arts
Chris Gray Enterprises
SNES
1 Player

B.O.B., the teenage robot (they call him an android, but except for his eyes he looks like a robot) is in deep space trouble. On his way to a blind date he ran into an asteroid and totalled his dad's car. Thrown by the accident onto Goth,



Bummer, dude! Like, I've got better things to do than fall through a trap!

one of those flat, ice-floe-shaped planets that populate the video game universe, he is immediately zapped into the interior of the planet.

It's not certain why he's brought inside the world, because (surprise!) the natives are unfriendly. However, it would appear that he evolved from a line of combat robots and he's ready. He arrived equipped with a previously unseen gun and access to an expandable variety of deadly weapons and so-called remotes. And there are occasional recharging stations, as well as revitalizing wrenches and 1-ups that give him added lives. He can jump, hover, crouch, and clamber along ladders, pipes and vines. He can even duck-waddle through low-ceiling passageways.

The manual advises the player that B.O.B., true to his teenage persona, has but one thing on his mind—to find another set of wheels (or the space car equivalent) so he won't keep his blind date waiting. Nothing's actually said about what Pop (or P.O.P.P.) will have on his mind, but it could be B.O.B. would rather face the Gothian hordes.

The game is another side-view shoot-'em-up, with variations. It's not all left-to-right scrolling; rather B.O.B. must negotiate a series of fairly simple (at least initially) narrow-window mazes, scrolling in all directions to get through each level. After Goth, there are a couple of other equally hostile planets to tra-

verse in search of that ever-needed replacement vehicle.

What sets this one apart from many similar scenarios is some imaginative character treatments for B.O.B. Besides the variety of remarks he makes on arrival in a new place, finding the portal to the next level, or dying (usually as a

beaten. An on-screen Boss has an energy meter, like B.O.B.'s, that dwindles and changes color as the teen-bot employs his arsenal against him.

The soundtrack is all sound effects and music, no digitized voices: B.O.B.'s remarks are in a clear balloon text. (His dad's instructions, in the opening set-up



mount of mud with eyes), he is well animated. He moves smoothly in each of the various modes, looking around as he goes, and reacts to different situations, such as surprise on sudden confrontations, and little dances on safe arrival at the portals.

Video game characters with personality are "in." B.O.B.'s characterizations are only a short step up from the Turtles, but do provide a reward element that adds to the enjoyment of the game play.

There is also a substantial variety of hostiles. Many shoot from off screen, or appear so fast that player reaction-time is not enough. Learning by dying may be a less than positive approach to life, but it gets you through the levels.

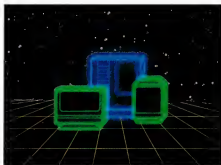
On the other hand, the introduction of restraint is a welcome addition to the normal shoot-everything-that-moves play technique. This shows up in the Scouts, enemy characters that precede certain Bosses. If B.O.B. blows such a scout away, the angry Boss that follows will repay in kind (the player is warned, "Watch your back!"). However, if he just shoots at the scout enough to scare it off, the Boss, though still tough, can be

sequence, consist largely of "Blah blah blah" interspersed with fatherly clichés, like "11 o'clock on the dot," and "Not a scratch, you hear?" B.O.B.'s responses are in kind: "No problem, Dad," and "I'm outta here!") The music, composed by Michael Bartlow, is described as rock 'n roll by no less an authority than B.O.B. himself, so it must be true despite any doubts the player may have. It provides a lively background for the game.

All in all, B.O.B. is a good-humored and satisfactory play. Even the inevitable and repeated frustrations of learning the traps and enemies have their up-beat side. Relive those exciting date nights with B.O.B.

—Ross Chamberlain

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	91%
Sound	78%
Playability	86%
OVERALL	
88%	

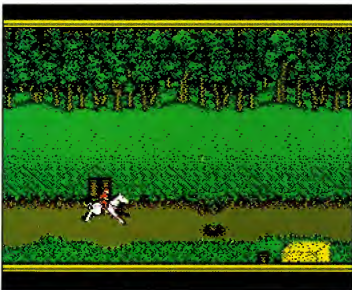


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Hillsfar

FCI
NES
1 Player

Hillsfar for the NES is a strong recreation of one of the more interesting, and neglected, of the computer-based Advanced Dungeons & Dragons RPGs published bySSI. A part of the AD&D Forgotten Realms action-adventure series, **Hillsfar** offers several arcade-style challenges that fit well into the video game environment, along with a varied and interesting backdrop and a simple yet interesting plotline.



Once upon a time, Hillsfar was a happy place, prosperous and happy. Then, the powerful merchant-magician Maalthir proclaimed himself First Lord of the city and clamped down hard, employing his ruthless Red Plume mercenaries to spy upon and suppress the people of Hillsfar. Cast in the role of Fighter, Magic User, Thief or Cleric class, the gamer comes to this blighted place seeking fortune, fame and honor.

In addition to class, a race must be selected for each character as well as an



Keep an eye out for the number of hit points you have. Health means wealth!

ethical alignment. Races include Dwarf, Elf, Gnome, Half-Elf and Human. Alignments range from Lawful/Good to Chaotic/Evil, with five shades in between, including True/Neutrals, who get off on the balance between good and evil, order and chaos. Finally, character attributes are determined by a roll. These consist of wisdom, intelligence, strength, dexterity, constitution, charisma and experience. Up to nine characters can be saved for further adventuring.

In and around the village of Hillsfar are any number of interesting locations, just bristling with treasure and danger. Move-

ment is accomplished in several methods, including transit through the streets of Hillsfar via an angled top-down view of the city. Travel from area to area is accomplished on horseback and movement within the maze-like dungeons is rendered in modified topdown perspective. There's also an arena where characters can battle it out, gladiator-fashion, in

order to make money, achieve fame, accrue honor and, if the character is lucky, perhaps even win a pardon for a past crime. Then, there's Tanna's Target Range where, in return for the price of admission, characters can join the marksmanship competition with slings, bow and arrow, daggers and darts for prizes and prestige.

Several of the sub-games involve real-time, action-oriented play. Riding from area to area, for example, is represented by a side-scrolling horseback riding con-

test in which the character must hurdle obstacles and duck underneath low-flying hunting birds. The play in these games is certainly not up to the standards of most 8-Bit arcade games, but that isn't really expected in an RPG such as **Hillsfar**.

The animations in the horsemanship contest are simple, the play response is sluggish, and the actual falls do not show any visual interaction between the horse and the object it stumbled over.

The maze games send the player-character through the warren-like buildings and labyrinths of the city on a search for treasure. When a chest is encountered, it will pop open if unlocked. If it's secured, however, the player may opt to spend time attempting to either pick or smash



Hillsfar is relying on you to restore it to the peace and prosperity it once knew.

the lock. The maze games, however, have a time limit, at the end of which a Red Plum Guard appears and goes directly after the character, who must reach the exit before the Guard seizes him. Again, the visual presentation isn't breathtaking and movement is often hard to control, but the game works.

Hillsfar is a fast-moving adventure that incorporates some of the most appealing ingredients of action-adventures, nicely blended with traditional role-playing features. In other words, this is a role-player for gamers who don't usually enjoy that genre, while hardcore adventurers should find enough offbeat and intriguing elements to satisfy their craving.

— Bill Kunkel

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	64%
Sound	67%
Playability	88%
OVERALL	
85%	

DECLARE WAR.



Super Conflict is war enough for anybody whether you're a video gamer, a board game fan, or a soldier. You call the shots for your ground, naval, and air forces in a Middle East theater of operations that can get very intense. Whether you deploy your infantry against the enemy's best commandos, scramble an F-15C fighter against a Mig-29 Fulcrum, or guide your sub's torpedoes against an approaching cruiser, **Super Conflict** delivers not only realistic military challenge, but also explosive action sequences.

Super Conflict is all the war you'll ever want.

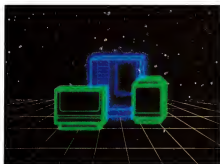


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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Mutant League Football

Electronic Arts
Genesis
1-2 Players

Cross **John Madden Football** with a wrestling battle royal, and the result might be something like this bloody interpretation of gridiron glory. Or should that be "gridiron gory"?

Mutant League Football obviously draws some inspiration from Games Workshop's non-electronic **Blood Bowl**. Team and player names are similar, and both embody the same carefree attitude toward cracking helmeted skulls.



"X" marks the spot for mutant-bashing.
Can you survive the Blood Bowl?

The rules of the two sports couldn't be more different, though. **Blood Bowl** is a weird combination of American football and rugby, but **Mutant League Football** embodies the same basic rules as the National Football League.

The play-mechanics of **MLF** owe more to EA's serious football titles than the board game. The play calling system for offense and defense won't be hard to learn for anyone who has played a quarter or two of **John Madden**.

The game plays head-to-head, or against the machine. Besides a good practice mode, the action game offers both single games and a play-off structure. A password system allows

continuation of a suspended playoff.

The option screen, which appears after the dramatic opening, customizes the game. Pushing the direction disk up and down moves through the adjustable items, and moving it side to side cycles through the available choices.

Sixteen teams, with names like the Midway Monsters, Psycho Slashers, Sixty Whiners and War Slammers, are ready to take the field. Each has a full roster of guys with names like Snake and Mauler who are anxious to maim anyone in an opposing jersey who gets in their way.

Home field advantage takes on deeper meaning with the 19 stadiums included in this cartridge. There's quite a selection of sites, most dotted with hazards. These range from thin ice on frozen fields to pits big enough to swallow up a mutant athlete. Ordinary football has no experience to compare with seeing one of the other side's receivers fall into a pit just as he's about to catch the game-winning touchdown.

Mutant League Football has four different game lengths. You can play with 10-, 5-, 2-, or 1-minute quarters. Few will bother to play a four-minute game, but it's ideal for giving a first-time coach a taste of game conditions.

This is a violent game. Even at its tamest, **Mutant League Football** is as gritty as any cartridge in the Genesis catalog. At the ultimate violence level, Annihilation, the carnage produces puddles of luridly red blood all over the gridiron. Even the cartoon-style artwork used for the players doesn't take much away from the gruesome activities that happen on every down.

The developers have wisely streamlined the **John Madden Football** play-system while retaining its strongest features. There are fewer formations and plays, but the presentation of the options is similar. Each choice is boxed with an animated diagram of what it represents. Three boxes are visible at a time, but pressing the direction disk left or right brings others into view.

The offense picks a formation by pressing a button. Repeating the process picks the actual play.

That brings up the vertically scrolling field. The offense is always at the bottom of the screen in solitaire contests.

When the teams break from their huddle, either can change the active on-screen player or call an audible.

Most of the formations and plays are standard stuff with menacing names, but there are a few that are strictly for use in the wild world of the **MFL**. You'll never see a Hail Scarey pass (in which the QB

lobs dynamite at the other team) in the Super Bowl!

Button C snaps the ball. Exceptional artificial intelligence fires both squads into sophisticated rough-and-tumble football action.

The passing routine makes aerials easy. After the quarterback drops back, pressing C brings up three receiver windows. Pressing a button throws the ball in the direction of the similarly labeled window. Control then switches automatically to the intended target.

A player under direct control can dive, punch, jump, and kick. A couple of timely



Although this is a spoof on football, it does contain some pigskin action!

blobs can spring the ball carrier loose for a big gain, or cause a potential touchdown run to stop dead.

Injuries and penalties are part of **Mutant League Football**, too. If the use of reserves is enabled on the option screen, each player has a blood gauge that monitors health. Putting a reserve in can save a player who might do something spectacular later in the game.

Art and animation are eye-catching, to say the least. Players crash and bash with abandon, and it's a rare play that doesn't end with a melee. A driving rock musical score and bestial grunts work well with the scenes of carnage.

Mutant League Football isn't the first game to mix monsters and football, but it is the best so far. If only the Pro Bowl would let the NFL players cut loose like these guys do!

—Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	90%
Playability	93%
OVERALL	
90%	

ELECTRIFYING

SUPERCHARGED GAMES



You'll need to unleash your fatal fists on some bad dudes and crazy creatures. *Punch-in* and get to work because this job will take a real super hero!

The smash arcade hit has been given a few new dents. Lead-footed criminals will grind your gears, not only on the highway, but the jungles and snow choked mountains as well.

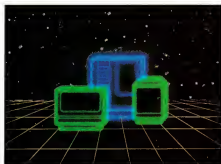


There's bone crunching action for Sega Genesis too. Unless you want some free dental work you had better stick in the mouthpiece, strap on the pads and **CHECK** it out!

Taito
THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN.

This head bangin' hard checkin' free-for-all will rattle your bones and send you flyin' into the next county. So, lace 'em up and **CHECK** it out!

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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Break Time— The National Pool Tour

FCI
NES
1-2 Players

Break Time is the most ambitious pool simulation ever produced for an 8-Bit video game system. Unfortunately, exalted intentions represent a small part of a game's overall value when compared to its execution.

This simulation of a national pool tour includes four different pool contests: 9-ball, rotation, 8-ball and a 14-1 rack game. In the two-player mode, a pair of human opponents try to out-hustle one another. The one-player format pits the gamer against any of four computer-operated pool players that range in proficiency from clumsy beginner to a professional-level shark capable of sophisticated trick shots. Games can be played in either a single contest format or Best of Three and there are passwords for saving and restoring a tournament in progress.

A large window occupies the upper two-thirds of the screen, with a topdown

view of the pool table, and three smaller windows at the bottom. The three lower windows feature a close-up of the cue ball which allows players to determine the english on each shot; a scoring update, and a text window which reports the results of each shot. This latter feature is fairly redundant, since it is pretty obvious whether a player has missed a shot or bagged it. In fact, this sometimes becomes confusing. In 9-ball, for example, the player must sink balls in numbered sequence. So, if the target is the 2-ball and the shooter sinks the 7, the text window will report that they have missed the shot. Anyone not familiar with the rules of 9-ball is apt to think the



This challenging pool simulator offers you four different billiards games.

program has gone mad at this point.

Here's how the game plays: The shooter uses a cursor to indicate the point where they wish to aim the cue ball. English is applied by moving a cursor around the close-up of the cue ball at the bottom of the screen to the exact point where they wish the stick to strike it. Finally, the stick itself is depicted at the bottom of the screen in side view, where it moves back and forth. The farther

away from the cue ball the stick is when the gamer hits the action button, the harder the shot.

The graphics are **Break Time's** major weakness. The balls do not have the rich color, much less the highlights, one would expect from an NES game at this point in time. After all, Data East's **Side Pocket** for the NES is at least

five years

old and it offers much more realistic ball movement — as well as superior sound effects as balls strike one another or drop into a pocket. At one point during the testing of **Break Time**, the cue ball hit a cushion and rocketed up against a cluster of seven balls. The cue ball then vibrated for several seconds before finally striking the cluster and breaking it up.

Electronic games do not exist in a vacuum. They must be judged against previous milestones which set certain standards and expectations for future software in that genre. Since the release of **John Madden Football** (EA Sports) on the Genesis, for example, no company has dared to release a gridiron simulation that is significantly inferior to that milestone program. Similarly, any pool contest should compare favorably with a game produced for the same hardware roughly half a decade ago.

Break Time does offer one major advantage over **Side Pocket**, however, and that is its computer-controlled competitors. The four skill levels are nicely staged to provide solid competition throughout the game's learning curve.



You can keep track of those really impressive scores with the chalk board.

This FCI game is also a more realistic pool simulation than the earlier title, without any of **Side Pocket's** more overtly arcade elements. Whether this is perceived as an advantage or not depends on the taste of the player.

Break Time isn't a total scratch, but it doesn't exactly clear the table, either.

— Bill Kunkel



RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	65%
Sound	80%
Playability	72%
OVERALL	
71%	

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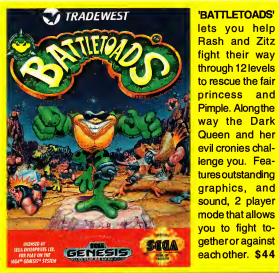
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GENESIS ADVENTURE

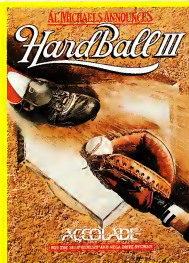
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'BATTLETOADS' lets you help Rash and Zitz fight their way through 12 levels to rescue the fair princess and Pimple. Along the way the Dark Queen and her evil cronies challenge you. Features outstanding graphics, and sound, 2 player mode that allows you to fight together or against each other. \$44



'HARDBALL 3' is a realistically modeled baseball simulator. Features a VCR-like instant replay view, digitized play-by-play commentary by Al Michaels, statistically based game play, a team logo creator, ability to create & save 2 complete teams, play exhibition games, a complete season, or the All Star game. \$49

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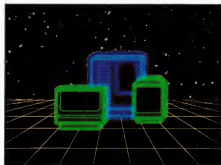
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Toys

Absolute Entertainment, Inc.

SNES

1 Player

Toys, the movie, got mixed reactions from critics and moviegoers alike. It was one of the 1992 holiday season's biggest box office bombs. In its favor, it was also the most visually attractive film of the year and its whimsical atmosphere appealed to the child inside everyone.

David Crane and Alex DeMeo took the basic premise of the film's climactic scenes and designed a game with game play unlike anything else. Had director Barry Levinson filmed the last third of *Toys* as Crane and DeMeo envisioned it, the movie would have been far more exciting, entertaining and unique.

Kenneth Zevo, founder of the Zevo Toys factory, recently died and left his business not to his son Leslie, who he felt was too irresponsible, but to his



Like the movie, the *Toys* game has many interesting graphic displays.

brother Leland, a decorated army general. The general makes radical changes, the most notable of which is the addition of war toys to the product line. These miniature deadly weapons go against everything Kenneth Zevo held dear.

Toys mimics the beautiful film sets in its levels. The animation and response of the toys is flawless, and combat

scenes involve as many toys as the play-

er cares to use. The possibilities are only limited by Leslie's inventory. Leslie has guided toys like football players, wind-up ducks and race cars in his arsenal. Projectiles like bowling balls, water balloons, pie tins and custard pies are even more powerful. Leslie can also activate some freestanding toys like the jack-in-the-box. Bad toys include bulldozers, exploding balloons, walking bombs, jeeps, slime and elf-like trolls whose hair catches on fire. Some toys even travel off-screen to disable the war toys, enhancing the realism.

The four challenging levels of *Toys* loosely follow the finale of the movie. It's up to the player as Leslie to send good toys into skirmishes with the war toys and take out the security cameras in the factory. After Leslie defeats the war toys, there is one last challenge, to guide a biplane over a scaled model of Manhattan previously used for Christmas pageants, and destroy the war toys command center.

The Manhattan model level is a side-scrolling arcade game in which Leslie must maneuver his biplane around buildings and scores of deadly helicopters until he reaches the command center. This level, standard fare as far as video games go, is a fitting conclusion to the buildup of excitement through the rest of the game. The real meat of *Toys* lies in the combat levels, because there is no one right way to win the battles and the experimentation is entertaining.

Each level of *Toys* has a number of security cameras to destroy. Two lines of defense surround each camera: a mixture of bad toys as the first defense and two or three deadly tanks as the second group. Leslie uses his arsenal of good toys to disable the bad toys and the mobile tanks and then he must weaken and destroy the security cameras with a squirt gun.

A press of the A button activates the selected good toy. The L and R buttons cycle through the available toys. Inventory is limited, but gift-wrapped packages fill up the supply of the currently-selected toy when Leslie moves over them. More



packages and other power-ups appear after each camera's destruction.

Almost every good toy can be used against every war toy, though some toys are obviously better than others. Leslie moves around the screens in an overhead three-quarters perspective view and releases the good toys: good aim is desirable here. Wandering bad toys can block Leslie and take away life points, so careful travel is also important.

The music and sound effects are key to the game play, because certain sounds indicate the destruction of a war toy, the arrival of a jet bearing soldiers and other events. Each level increases in difficulty until utter toy mayhem fills the screen in the last few security camera areas. Leslie must aim carefully at the eyes of an elephant and then at an exposed lens to take out each disguised security camera in a true test of skill. Quick reflexes are paramount for this particular title.

This mixture of arcade games and the combat levels makes *Toys* unique and very playable. Talented gamers are sure to enjoy the excellent visuals and sound effects, and interesting action. *Toys* is playable again and again, each time in a different way and with a challenging but manageable task ahead.

—Russ Ceccola

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	85%
Playability	95%
OVERALL	
90%	

Tiny Toons: Buster's Hidden Treasure

Konami
Genesis
1 Player

The timeless youngsters from Tiny Toons star in their first Genesis game. Appearing on both NES and SNES, they are really playing the circuit, and doing so in a big way. The clever cuties grace the Genesis with all the animations and antics that made them and their "parents" famous.

Take Buster on a treasure hunt as he tries to catch up with Montana Max and stop the evil doctor, Gene Splicer. The madcapped MD has trapped all the female toons and even used his mind control device to turn Buster's friends (Dizzy Devil, Plucky Duck, Calamity Coyote, and Hampton) against him. If that wasn't bad enough, he has to contend with the bratty Elmyra and Montana Max throughout the game. No one said it would be easy, but is the treasure really worth it?

Buster must trek through seven tough territories with a total of 33 stages! His journey will take him from an enchanted forest, through caverns of bubbling lava, down underground lakes, through frozen tundra and more. Don't fret just yet, because he'll have Gogo Dodo as a guide to help him along the way.

With Gogo as Buster's guide, he should expect tons of hidden surprises and he won't be let down. Each level has several hidden areas with trick walls and underground power-ups. Not only that, but there are several special bonus rooms with tricky paths that lead to mega power-ups if Buster can make it through the puzzles.

Although this game has a linear quest, there is sometimes more than one exit per room, and each new exit makes a different path along the way. This gives the player all the more reason to explore each level thoroughly as he searches for power-ups, tricks and hidden paths.

Another good feature of this game is the ability to repeat any area that has already been completed (except the boss



The Tiny Toons characters come to life in their latest video game adventure.

sections). Even if the gamer gets all the way to the end the game, he can still get more entertainment, searching through past levels for the extra exists and alternative paths. This technique also makes a great method for powering up if the player learns to master one of the areas.

Graphics and sound are reminiscent of the cartoon's style with colorful displays and a loony sound track. Each of the seven zones has a unique theme with an all-new color scheme and

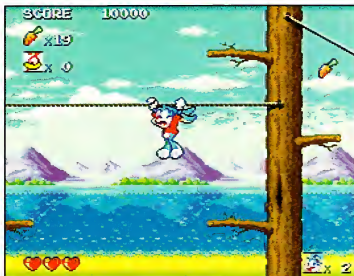
scrolling backgrounds. The music changes along with the levels, but its fluctuation isn't quite as dramatic as the classic cartoon-drawn animations.

Although Buster has a long and tough haul ahead of him, there are plenty of moves to help him get by. Watch as Buster slides, crawls, jumps, and even swings by his enemies in the name of money and friends. Each move is animated with a cute rendition in the hilarious "Toons" style.

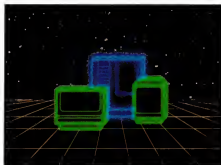
Equally as enjoyable as the characters and graphics are the control and game play. The numerous levels lend to multiple challenges from skidding ice platforms to crucial lava leaps, and total jumping mayhem. At each new provocation, the control performs up to par and allows the player to have ultimate control when facing various threats.

With a Mario-type feel and the famous Tiny Toons characters, this game is sure to be a big hit. There is always plenty to discover, and with multiple exists and replayability, it will keep fans busy for a long time. As an added bonus, there are unlimited continues and a password feature to make the explorations a little easier. Grab your controller and dive right in...let the treasure hunt begin!

— Howard Grossman



RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	88%
Sound	74%
Playability	82%
OVERALL	
86%	



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Super Turrican

Selka
SNES
1 Player

Super Turrican is the type of game that, although it does not break any new ground, does everything it is supposed to do extremely well.

Super Turrican delivers a fast paced, action-rich adventure complete with solid graphics, smooth game play, and great sound effects. Filled with secret passages, rooms, and surprises, **Super Turrican** is something of a cross between a

When the game begins, the player has a single-shot laser cannon and a freeze ray. The freeze ray is a unique weapon in the sense that it remains the same throughout the game - you cannot power-up the freeze ray nor can you lose it. The freeze ray ices small enemies for a moment, allowing Turrican time to blow them away with his blaster.

Conversely, the gamer has ample opportunities throughout the game to power-up his blaster. By picking up different colored icons, the gamer can increase the destructive force of his blaster.

Picking up the blue icons boosts the weapon's laser blast. The laser has a high penetration rate, making it most effective when fighting against bosses. The laser fires in a concentrated pattern horizontally, and can be increased up to five times.

The spray weapon is enhanced by picking up red icons. The spray is the most effective general weapon, and particularly useful when fighting smaller enemies simultaneously.

Yellow icons increase the power of the bounce weapon. The bounce blast is most efficient in narrow passages or

caves. The player releases a burst that, when it hits any surface, ricochets off and breaks up into smaller balls.

The last, and most important weapon the player has at his disposal, is the power line. The player has only a limited number of these, but releasing a power line annihilates every enemy on the screen - unless the enemy is shielded by an obstacle.

Throughout the game, the player will notice several opportunities to power-up. The gamer should be advised to take advantage of such opportunities, for this game is no cakewalk. Extra lives can be found in the most unsuspecting of places.

The gamer encounters a wide array of menaces in a number of diverse settings. From the beating heart background of the aliens' lair to the chilling gusts of the arctic level, **Super Turrican**

makes full use of the Super Nintendo's graphic capabilities.

Perhaps the most challenging enemies in the game, if not the most annoying, are the bumble bees. They're prevalent throughout the first few stages of the game, and their quickness and sheer numbers make them a very tough bunch to keep under control. It is best to use the freeze ray to ice them over, and then blast them while they are crystallized on the ground. The gamer should also be advised to blow up their hives whenever he encounters one - or else the persistent bees will keep coming.



Spellbinding graphics and incredible sounds make Super Turrican a real hit.

As mentioned earlier, the game is loaded with one-ups, power-ups, and secret rooms. It's worth it to play the game a few times to find out where some of these bonuses are. But because there is a time limit to finish each level, gamers shouldn't spend too much time searching if they intend to reach the end of the game.

Even though it lacks a major license tie-in, **Super Turrican** is among the finest shooters available for the Super NES. From a technical standpoint it doesn't really break any new ground, but from an execution standpoint, it's an exceptionally solid game.

A final note: **Super Turrican** is one of the first cartridge-based games to incorporate Dolby Surround Sound. Expect this feature to become increasingly prevalent in new games.

- Joe Funk

Mario-world game and the movie Aliens. The player assumes the role of a fighter from the U.S.S. Freedom Forces. Equipped with a special assault suit dubbed Turrican, the player must battle his way through five distinct levels of mayhem and defend the peaceful planet of Katakis.

Option settings allow the player to select between an easy, regular, or hard level of difficulty. Even the easy setting offers quite an impressive challenge.

RATING

Complexity	Average
Graphics	84%
Sound	93%
Playability	87%

OVERALL

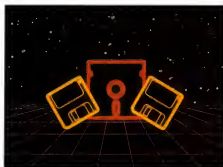
88%

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Paladin II

Omnitrend (distributed by Impressions)
Designed by: Chris Bamford and
Thomas Carbone
MS-DOS
1 Player

Paladin II differs from the majority of fantasy role-playing products. The player is not forced into an epic struggle between good and evil to decide the fate of entire worlds or dimensions. Instead, the player's objective adheres to the original premise of fantasy role playing, i.e., character development over time through completion of individual quests. Players begin as novice Paladins and develop into religious crusaders of mythical proportions only through the successful completion of the twenty quests included in the game. The types of objectives include prisoner rescue, capture of significant scrolls, holding tactical locations, destroying dangerous magical items and egressing from specific exits when tactically outnumbered. Defeating a specific number of enemy opponents is sometimes significant, but the emphasis of **Paladin II** is definitely not hack and slash.

In addition to the quests provided, Omnitrend is developing add-on disks of 20 quests each. Further, a complete quest builder system allows players to design and swap scenarios. To build a

quest, the player must first write an introduction, which explains the fictional premise motivating the journey. Next, the player designs the terrain model, composed of square grids and from one to five levels deep.

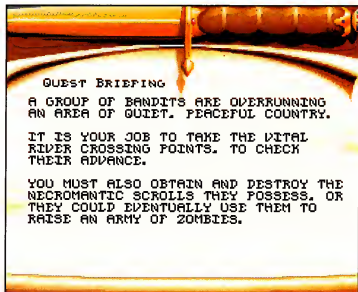
Composition of enemy and friendly parties is determined and the player selects the overall objective as well as the time limit. Each quest can contain up to 60 opponents, 60 items, 10 party members and 20 messages associated with specific terrain squares. Although each quest is normally self contained, it is possible to chain quests

together to form a campaign. One must be careful in these designs, however, to avoid making them overwhelming, as the Paladin and his party will not have the opportunity to rest or heal between individual sections.

Obvious parallels may be drawn to earlier Omnitrend products, most specifically the **Breach** series. The player does control a party of adventurers, but the reward for successful completion of a quest is directly related to the level of participation of the Paladin. Party members also change from quest to quest, reinforcing player empathy toward the central character. Party members may be swordsmen, rangers, thieves or mages, each of whom are rated for movement, vitality, health, encumbrance, melee, aiming, detecting (seeing) and ranged weapon skill.

Paladin II uses a point-and-click icon type interface with standard adventuring commands. The only mechanic which is

a little awkward is a click-and-drag system for movement. Keyboard control in this area allows for finer placement and more judicious use of movement points. Graphic and sound presentation are



greatly refined over earlier Omnitrend products and it is obvious that the design team is taking advantage of hardware improvements in the user base.

The greatest appeal of **Paladin II** is a return to the original premise of fantasy role playing, invoking lasting affection and empathy for a player-character that transcends the completion of a single objective. **Paladin II** permits players with limited time to develop a feeling of accomplishment in a single sitting.

— Ed Dille



In order to win the title of **Paladin**, the player must overcome many enemies.

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	85%
Sound	83%
Playability	87%
OVERALL	
85%	

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Mystery Word Grid

		T			MYSTERY I WORD
H	E	A	V	Y	
	R				
S					
				L	

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

HEAVYI LEAVE.....C METERP MAJORT
ABOVER VOCALO MODAL...A CORALB
TRILLD ENTRY.....V SPOILE MUSIC.....H

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

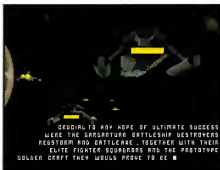
Epic

Ocean Software Ltd.
Designed by: Digital Image Design Ltd.
MS-DOS
1 Player

Fleeing from an impending supernova, the last battlestars, *Battleaxe* and *Red-storm*, lead a ragtag, fugitive fleet on a lonely quest—a shining planet called *Ulysses 7*.

If this scenario sounds vaguely familiar it's because **Epic**, Ocean's luscious new space combat simulator, has risen from the ashes of TV's *Battlestar Galactica*. Fortunately, there's not a trace of Richard Hatch to be found.

Like all true epics, Ocean's has been a long time in the making. Digital Image Design started work on this space saga shortly after completing *F-29 Retaliator* four years ago, and **Epic** is just what the doctor ordered for Amiga gamers longing for a decent **Wing Commander**-like experience. (The long-awaited Amiga **Wing Commander** runs so slowly on a 500s



As a highly-talented fighter pilot, you will be called to perform many duties.

that all of the game's excitement flows right down the 7 MHz drain).

PC **Wing Commander** veterans needn't worry about **Epic** being redundant; the two games are galaxies apart. **Epic** features smoothly-animated, filled polygons as opposed to **Wing Commander's** blocky bitmapped objects. **Epic** is also a



darker, more urgent game with less emphasis on character interaction and more on fulfilling missions that enable the fugitive fleet to make it safely to its new home world.

The main problem is that the path to *Ulysses 7* cuts right through *Rexxon* space and the reptilian *Rexxons* are not only mean and ugly, they're downright evil. Even though they know the humans are simply fleeing the supernova and not launching an attack on the *Rexxon* Empire, they decide to destroy the fleet anyway.

Both Amiga and MS-DOS versions are simple yet challenging. Digital Image Design outdid itself with dozens of lavishly animated storyboard screens and cinematic shots of fighters launching and recovering (the PC version runs rings around the Amiga here).

Spacecraft have been borrowed from every familiar sci-fi film and TV show and lovingly rendered into the game as delightful aesthetic treats. Colonial *Vipers*, *Klingon Birds of Prey* and ships recognizable from *Star Wars* to *Silent Running* stretch the length of the fleet.

Each type of enemy craft has its own attack pattern: small fighters get right in your face while the larger *Warbirds* hang back and lob missiles. Each weapon also has its own convincing sound effect: pulsing lasers, screeching plasma cannons and photon torpedoes that whistle menacingly through the air (or more precisely, vacuum).

Missions consist of destroying assigned targets within a strict time limit. Pilot briefings are presented in an

appealingly high-tech fashion but frequently omit vital information (like the existence of targets that don't show up on the map). Cockpit displays seem to change randomly, usually at the worst possible moment and the in-flight refueling process is never actually explained.

On the other hand, pilots are free to ignore mission orders and just go sightseeing; there's plenty to eyeball, both planetside and in space.

Three of **Epic's** missions involve massive space battles in and around the fleet of a scale and speed that's nothing short of awesome.

PC **Epic** may be controlled with a joystick, mouse or keyboard. Amiga **Epic** is mouse only, but features a handy documented cheat mode that gives unlimited fuel and weapons. There is no save game feature but, after the player (and his two bioclones) dies, a code is given so that play may be resumed on the same level.

Epic may not be a perfect game, but even the coolest Harley-Davidson leaks a little oil.

—Scott Wolf

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	90%
Sound	89%
Playability	92%
OVERALL	
93%	

Comanche: Maximum Overkill

Nova Logic

Designed by Kyle Freeman & John Garcia

MS-DOS

1 Player

Occasionally a program comes out of left field and astonishes the most jaded player. Such is the case with Nova Logic's **Comanche: Maximum Overkill**. At long last, a flight simulator has arrived that delivers truly realistic terrain representation.



Comanche lets players operate in undulating, topographically accurate terrain, etched with river canyons, valleys and cliffs rendered in stunning 256 color detail. It is so engrossing when flying down river canyons that it's easy to lose track of the fire mission.

During daylight missions the player is treated to a powder-blue sky accented by cirrus clouds. At night, the gamer must pick out enemy helicopters against a twinkling starlight backdrop. Throughout, the impression is one of near photographic quality.

The only graphic representations which are less than superb are the somewhat chunky bitmapped close-ups of enemy units, which make visual recognition difficult. Even these are forgivable, however, as they are only noted on close fly-bys. Most of the targeting is done on a tactical screen in the cockpit which offers a clear display.

To the uninitiated, **Comanche** is the military nickname for the RAH-66 multipurpose helicopter. Termed the LHX during its early stages of development, the airframe has already been the subject of

several games. The first prototype is slated to fly in 1994 and is designed to fill the scout/attack air cavalry role well into the 21st century.

To reflect the shifting of strategic emphasis away from a major armored conflict in Europe, the scenarios in **Comanche** parallel real world employment doctrine. Players participate in either training missions or the Maximum Overkill Campaign game.

The use of the term campaign is somewhat of a misnomer, because there is no continuity of opponents or objectives throughout. A more apt description

might be that of a career, as one is called upon for missions that vary from drug interdiction operations to intervention in a future India-Pakistan border dispute. Each mission presents unique challenges and enemy units, particularly helicopters, perform admirably, using real world tactics like terrain masking.

The **Comanche** carries an impres-

sive weapons load that includes Hellfire air-to-ground missiles, Stinger missiles in their first helicopter air-to-air application, and a point-of-look/point-of-aim 20mm Vulcan cannon (i.e.: the gun swivels with



The player can access many helpful menus, even while flying the missions.

the pilot's head for immediate target acquisition).

Other means of engagement include a command option for the Wingman and the ability to designate ground targets for destruction by off-board artillery. The

latter option is not only a tactically correct extension of the coordinated battlefield, it allows the player to conserve on-board ordinance during the flight while clearing out a number of dangerous radar and SAM batteries.

Further, the player will be delighted when the call for fire mission is acknowledged in crisp digitized speech, which is used extensively throughout the program. Any damage incurred will be displayed on a separate damage status screen, as well as being mentioned by a computerized voice.

Comanche: Maximum Overkill is such a watershed program in terms of graphic



The incredible landscapes come to life when piloting this well-armed gunship.

excellence that it will accomplish two purposes, whether it set out to or not.

First, it may force many players to upgrade their systems simply to play the game, thereby creating a larger high tech user base that companies can count on when developing future products. This is significant, because visionary designers are often hobbled by commercial considerations if CEOs believe there aren't enough high-end machines out there to justify the expense of extending the programming envelope.

Second, **Comanche** should put the final nail in the coffin on flight simulators that employ polygon or pyramid based terrain on landscapes, regardless of the realism of their flight model or other features. **Comanche: Maximum Overkill** is an unequivocal candidate for flight simulator of the year.

— Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Hard
Graphics	98%
Sound	92%
Playability	98%
OVERALL	
96%	



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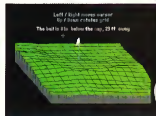


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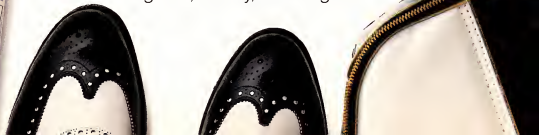


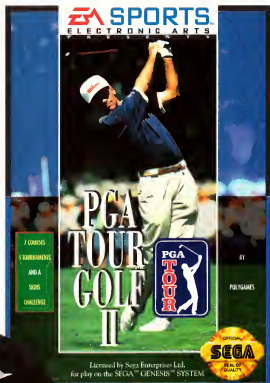
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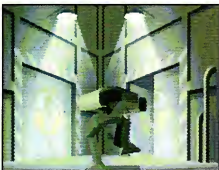


SOFTWARE GALLERY

Robocop 3D

Ocean of America
Designed by: Digital Image Design Ltd.
Amiga, MS-DOS
1 Player

Six months after the announcement of the Delta City project, the citizens of Old Detroit are still reluctant to leave their homes. OCP, standing to lose billions of dollars if work does not commence within the week, has hired a special group of urban rehabilitation officers, called REHABS, to forcibly remove people from their homes.



Many familiar enemies await Robocop when he tries to restore law and order.

Based on the script of Orion's third Robocop movie, Ocean's **Robocop 3D** hit the market long before the troubled film project, and represents a radical departure in Ocean's approach to film-licensed games. Instead of settling for another platform shoot-em-up, Digital Image Design, the wizards responsible for **F-29 Retaliator** and the stunning new **EPIC**, created a first-person, 3-D polygon world through which the player, as Robocop, walks, drives and even flies. And it works! The virtual reality of Old Detroit is utterly convincing despite its overall graphic simplicity.

Robocop 3D may be played as a movie adventure following the linear structure of the film, or as pure arcade action with instant access to any sec-

tion. Either way, the game essentially consists of four different elements: driving in a Police Turbo Cruiser, patrolling on foot, flying with the aid of a newly-designed Gyropack, and close-quarter combat.

Mediabreak personalities Jess Perkins and Casey Wong introduce each section from the set of their TV Newsflash program, then the player is briefed via the visor display in Robocop's helmet. The directives are clear: Protect the Innocent, Uphold the Law and serve the Public Trust. However, the plot of **Robocop 3D** sometimes throws these tenets into conflict. Upholding the law might endanger innocents; serving the public trust can violate the law. How the player interprets his orders determines the outcome of Robo's mission.

Foot patrol features floating crosshairs in Robo's visor allowing him to zero in on the bad guys, sometimes sharpshooting between the arms and legs of civilians. The bodies of the deceased may be used as landmarks in the game's maze-like alleys and corridors. Killing innocent people causes damage to Robo's CPU and reduces his efficiency. When his efficiency level hits zero, Robo himself terminates.

The driving sections are first-rate, as Robo patrols an Old Detroit that bears an eerie resemblance to the landscape of Spectrum Holobyte's **Falcon**. Flying with the Rocketeer-inspired gyropack involves both air-to-air and air-to-ground combat



Although Robocop is a tough cop, he will need some backup to be victorious.

against tanks, helicopters and the ram-paging ED-209s.

Close Quarter Combat contains the game's weakest sequences, one-on-one battles with the robot ninja, Otomo. Control is awkward and Robo is no match for Otomo in the agility department. As in all sections of the game, the action may be viewed from a host of alternate perspectives which have both dramatic and tactical value, but are useless from a control standpoint.

The player may use mouse, joystick or keyboard; however, since the Amiga version was originally designed to run with a



"hardware key" in the joystick port (it now uses manual protection), both mouse and joystick use the same port and must be physically switched, a fact not mentioned in the manual. Also peculiar are requests for disks A, B & C when the labels clearly read 1, 2 & 3. Not a monumental problem, but it is annoying.

These niggling details aside, **Robocop 3D** hangs together well and represents one "play the movie" offering that actually lets gamers do just that. Many gamers will appreciate the authenticity of the game mechanics and the overall feel of the action sequences.

— Scott Wolf

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	89%
Sound	85%
Playability	93%
OVERALL	
93%	

Task Force 1942: Surface Naval Action in the South Pacific

MicroProse
Designed by Lawrence Schick and
Ed Fletcher
MS-DOS
1 Player

WWII naval warfare is the latest topic of choice for military wargames/simulations; most major developers seem to have at least one product in the works. MicroProse's **Task Force 1942** attempts to recreate the fog of war experienced by both U.S. and Imperial Japanese Naval commanders during the Solomons campaign. The struggle for Guadalcanal remains legendary in the annals of naval history, not only because of the courageous actions of shiphandlers on both sides (many of whom now litter Ironbottom Sound), but because it clearly represents a turning point for U.S. forces in the Pacific.

Many of the engagements were chance night encounters as undermanned American cruiser destroyer groups attempted to interdict the famed Tokyo Express, ferrying supplies from Rabul to the Japanese garrison at Tassafaronga. Before the introduction of radar, surface forces blundering into one another in the darkness lead to quick, decisively bloody confrontations at short range. Naturally, confusion and chaos reigned, as flash-blinded lookouts struggled to identify friend from foe and star shells arced through cloudy skies that made the world mud dark.



Commanding a battleship during WWII can be a very nerve-wracking position.

Task Force 1942 offers players the option of commanding any of the historical engagements or embarking on the entire Guadalcanal campaign. The campaign game is the heart of the **TF 1942** system. As naval commander, the player has several objectives. The primary goal



is to occupy all three of the bases on the island of Guadalcanal: Aola, Henderson Field and Tassafaronga. The player does not control ground battles directly, rather the side which possesses a significant advantage in men and supplies goes on the offensive. Reinforcements must be moved to the island as soon as possible to keep all combatant troops well supplied, in order to avoid additional losses due to Malaria, dysentery and other maladies common to the South Pacific. Other objectives include interdiction of enemy supplies and destruction of enemy shipping, factors which enter into victory calculations along with the amount of time it takes to complete the campaign.

Subordinate commanders are assigned to each task group, and they make tactical decisions relatively consistent with those of their historical models. Each task group, composed of up to sixteen ships, is given either a supply, patrol or bombardment mission. Way points are assigned and the group will accomplish its mission without further player intervention unless enemy forces are contacted. At that point the player chooses to observe the results of the action or take tactical command of the forces to directly influence the outcome.

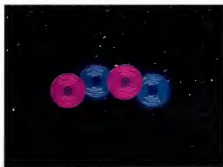
The tactical model is less successful than the strategic one. Players are treated to richly-rendered ship graphics, shells arcing through the sky, splashes close aboard and bitmapped explosions, but the fluff does little to override some of the inappropriate design choices. As an example, it is very difficult to get

destroyers in a mixed cruiser-destroyer task group to peel off for a torpedo run, despite the fact that this was their only significant tactical function. Second, during individual firing runs, the AI opts for a near suicidal straight approach as opposed to conventional zig-zag. Additionally, American damage control was historically more efficient than that of the Japanese, but **TF 1942** uses the same model for both sides and offers the player none of the options for allocating damage control parties that are used in other programs like **Action Stations** or **Great Naval Battles: North Atlantic**. Finally, the graphic modeling for night engagements is a shade of blue gray that permits the player to see entirely too much and at too great a range.

MicroProse's rendition of this conflict succeeds on the strategic level but fails to recreate the intensity and confusion inherent in close action surface combat. **Task Force 1942**, as the first product in a proposed series, is good enough to entice players, but subsequent releases should correct some shortcomings.

— Ed Dille

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	82%
Sound	72%
Playability	76%
OVERALL	
77%	

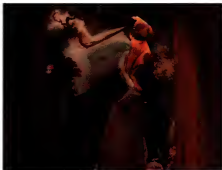


CD GALLERY

Review

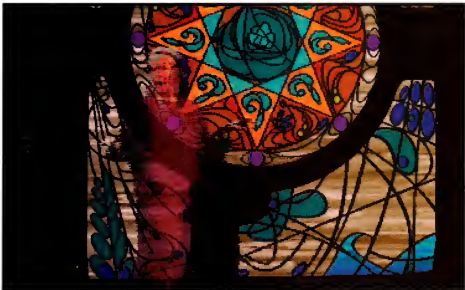
The 7th Guest Virgin Games PC CD-ROM

The long-awaited release of this game, perhaps the most impressive piece of CD-ROM software to date, is about to become a reality. **The 7th Guest** takes horror-style computer gaming to a creepy and frightening new level, and leaves the player to his own wits in his quest to



**A picture is worth a thousand words...
The animated scenes can be chilling!**

uncover the secrets behind a strange man and his iniquitous mansion.



This title is built around a fantastic storyline. The story of Henry Stauf (who is introduced in the opening of the game as a man who rose from petty theft to incredible wealth via the toymaking profession) was written before the game was programmed, rather than the opposite. It seems that the player takes on a mysterious role. As he ventures throughout the house, he must piece together a

myriad of strange events, played out before him by ghostly apparitions. These individuals are guests of the owner of the mansion, invited to figure out "the puzzle." The player must solve many smaller puzzles, glean information from the animated sequences, and try to stay alive long enough to figure out who the 7th guest actually is.

The entire game exudes a horror-movie atmosphere. A spooky soundtrack plays throughout, changing tunes when different events occur. The sound effects are first rate, from eerie moans that ring through the rafters, to the digitized

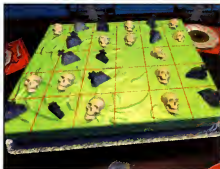


What is the secret behind the strange "puzzle" the guests are talking about?



speech of the other guests.

The sound is matched only by the absolutely incredible graphics. When playing the game, the gamer will feel as if he has been thrown right into a thriller movie, and has no idea where the script is going, nor how to get there. Paintings



Many strange and difficult puzzles await the player who undertakes the task.

will come to life. Ancient skeletons will sit at a piano and play bone-chilling music. Walls will move, and carpets will be transformed into swirling colors and grotesque scenes. This game really makes the player "feel" what is going on in the world of the **7th Guest**.

Aside from the dazzling, full-color VGA graphics, the fluidity of movement is also a tremendously strong point for this interactive title. As the player follows a beckoning, skeletal hand, he will experience computer-generated motion as yet unseen in most games. The screen, from a complete standstill, will begin to slowly move past the player until he reaches his destination. Full scaling and rotation are used to create the illusion of actually walking up a foreboding staircase or sitting at an expensive, yet sinister piano.

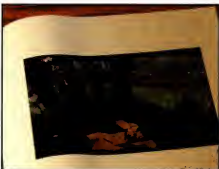
One must not forget that there is a

clever game amidst the cinematic excellence portrayed in this title. A number of brain-teasing puzzle games will challenge the gamer to use his analytical thinking skills. The old "arrange the pieces until they spell out a message" puzzle is twisted into an escape sequence. The player must arrange a series of gates to avoid a deathtrap in the cellar of the mansion. In addition, there is a card game, a maze situated on a rug, a puzzle using the keys on Stauf's piano, and a letter-puzzle that can only be accessed by using a telescope. These, along with many other obstacles, provide the player with more than enough to do while trying to figure out just who (or what) is behind the overall story.

The entire time spent in the mansion is dripping with non-stop chills and thrills. Even calm moments will scare the daylights out of most gamers. For instance, while investigating a simple room, the player is treated to an

animated sequence of a ghostly feminine figure who enters the scene, makes an unkind remark, and leaves. However, as she is departing, the player is allowed the pleasure of seeing her entire face melt into a frightening, grinning skull. Another rather creepy instance occurs when the player chooses to examine a certain painting (by positioning the skull icon with flashing eyes, signifying a "look further" interface) and the canvas begins to press outwards, being pushed by the hands of a trapped being, held within the frame of the evil rendering. In addition, the transport scenes, in which the player examines a picture of floor covering and is instantly drawn into the scene, are equally scary. However, they certainly add to the chilling feel of the game.

The mansion itself is rather large. It contains about two dozen rooms and fifteen different characters can be seen



The introduction is displayed through an ingenious animated storybook film.

within its walls, including, of course, Stauf himself. While inside, the player must rely on his senses to figure out the mystery of the **7th Guest**.

— Tim Ostermiller





PORTABLE PLAYTIME

Kid Dracula

Konami
Game Boy
1 Player

Scrolling action games frequently have problems translating to the Game Boy. Highly detailed background graphics and tiny character sprites can be a prescription for optical pain on the GB's tiny, black & white screen. **Kid Dracula**, however, short circuits these potential weaknesses with large, cleanly-drawn characters and simple but attractive props.

Kid Dracula is the infamous Count's cool offspring, portrayed as a cartoonish, contemporary youngster with big hair, a couple of big teeth and several neat magical powers. Unfortunately, as the game begins, the Kid can only actually remember two of the many possible offensive and defensive spells—firing magical bullets at enemies and transforming himself into a bat—but as play progresses, more powers are awarded, courtesy of that arbiter of alchemy, the Cross-Eyed Creep, a character who is part mentor and part servant to Kid Drac. Additional powers include the Bat Attack (in which a squadron of faithful bats

appear from within Kid Dracula's cape, attack and destroy any on-screen enemies then return home), Wing 'n Homing Missiles (similar to the bats), the Giant Bat Bomb (blows up anything, including walls), the Umbrella Lugosi (a shield), and the ability to walk on or hang from the ceiling.

The game also offers several unique props, including a series of sequential see-saws which Kid Dracula must navigate across, both vertical and horizontal scrolling, and detailed on-screen data detailing his current status. The Kid's power level, number of remaining lives, a bar graph representing the status of his current life, and the number of gold coins he's collected all appear in the margins surrounding the large display area.

The storyline revolves around Kid Dracula's efforts to defeat Garamoth, the typically evil lizard king from the year 2 billion B.C. who has journeyed to the future, not to play **Street Fighter II**, but for the express purpose of usurping the Kid's kingdom. And, of course, he's brought a nasty army of minions along.

Game play covers eight nicely drawn levels, from Drac's castle to the Robotics Factory Zone. Along the way, Kid Drac visits the Forest of Fools, a Ghost Pirate Ship, a monster volcano and several other exotic locations.

The game also offers a quintet of interesting sub-levels, which can only be accessed after clearing a level. If Kid Drac accumulates enough golden coins, which are gained by wiping out an enemy with a powered-up weapon, he can choose to play

one of these five subterranean crypt games. The sub-games come in two flavors, one of which increases Drac's supply of gold coins while the other wins him additional lives. The sub-games are fairly simple, such as a "Transylvanian" version of Rock, Paper, Scissors, and a coin collection contest.



Kid Dracula is on a mission to thwart the plans of Garamoth, an evil wizard.

The youthful vampire hero faces a fascinating gallery of over a dozen goofy monster types in his quest to defeat Garamoth, including Frankenpunk; a Kid-Eating Plant known as Shades; a penetrating foe known as Phyllis Driller; and the unforgettable Metal, the Heavy.

Kid Dracula is one of those rare scrolling action games with a cute sense of humor, great characters and clean graphics. It also has an excellent musical track that sounds like a cross between the themes from "George of the Jungle" and "Tails-pin."

— Bill Kunkel



RATING	
Complexity	Easy
Graphics	85%
Sound	90%
Playability	87%
OVERALL	
88%	

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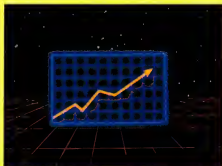
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KUNKEL REPORT

The Best Games Never Played

by Bill Kunkel

Their names are spoken in reverent whispers. Veteran computerists debate over which was the greatest, the most original, the most compelling. But when post-Nintendo gamers strain to overhear the names of these legendary programs, the titles seldom ring a bell.

This, you see, is a roll call of five of the greatest computer games that failed. Failure, of course, is relative. Not all these games were financial flops; some even made a few bucks.

These games were classics condemned to cult status. The reasons for their lack of success are as varied as their play mechanics, but all have two things in common: they were superb and they deserve a better hand than they've been dealt. Today, however, they return, albeit briefly, to their rightful places in the sun.

M.U.L.E. (Electronic Arts) was created by Ozark Softscape for the Atari computers. It combined sophistication, humor and solid game design in a contest that required two or more players to mine for interplanetary resources with the help of a robotic burro. Its fans remain among the most devoted cultists in the annals of electronic gaming.

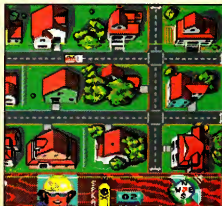
Where did it go wrong? The game, alas, was so complex that it was impossible to program the Atari computers to play a competitive game. So, at least two humans were required for a game, and true mavens disdained play with fewer than four. Computer games that can't be played solitaire have rarely enjoyed commercial success.

Rescue on Fractalus (Epyx) was one of the first two computer games (along with **Ballblazer**) developed by the software division of Lucasfilm. Unfortunately, a beta version of this cinematic SF classic (then titled **Behind Jaggi Lines**) was leaked through the on-line pirate net-

works, causing the one and only George Lucas to go ballistic.

The game was ultimately released by Epyx over a year later, but by then almost every Atari owner already had a pirated copy in his collection.

Typhoon Thompson & the Search for the Sea Child (Brøderbund) was an off-beat, exotic game published exclusively for a doomed system: the Atari ST. This addictive program featured incredible miniature graphics and a plot that blended fantasy, sci-fi and high-speed action. It boasted a player-character who navi-



Arachnophobia challenged players to rid a small town of a large horde of spiders.

gated the ocean surface in a jet-propelled inner tube complete with front-mounted zap cannon, a pre-adolescent sea goddess and a collection of cute little sea sprites who looked like the Sea Monkeys that were always being advertised on the backs of comic books.

Brøderbund expressed some interest in alternative formats for this lost gem, but was unable to come to terms with the creator and Typhoon disappeared beneath the waves.

Another lost gaming treasure, also published by Brøderbund, was the addictive **Wings of Fury**, a side-view air combat game set in the Pacific during WWII. Realistic graphics, fluid play mechanics and its unusual point-of-view all meshed to produce a game almost impossible to stop playing. Unfortunately, it was released exclusively for the Amiga, a computer system which could not generate enough sales to establish it as a hit.

A more recent title which got lost in the shuffle away from 16-color PC graphics was Disney's **Arachnophobia**, one of the best-designed movie adaptations in the computer software field.

The plot follows the film, with deadly South American spiders terrorizing small town America. It's up to the player, as an exterminator armed with the best in bug termination gear, to save the day.

The game switches from an angled overview of the entire town to a multi-level side view once the player enters a location. The player moves through house after house, through large cities and back to the Amazon in search of the mama spiders, with the game generating all the tension and suspense of a good horror film. The player has the help of a few additional exterminator accessories. For example, the Regulation Issue Boot, as described in the humorous manual, "is capable of crushing the exoskeleton of an insect and rearranging its internal contents in one fell stomp." Had this game been rendered in 256 colors rather than 16, the sky could have been the limit for this enthralling thriller.

There you have them, classics all. As in musical tastes, sometimes particular gamers will enjoy certain titles that just don't make it with the general public. However, this doesn't mean that the players are being trapped into spending money on games that are not entertaining. The true value of these titles comes from the overall enjoyment the player receives. Regardless of the financial tally adhered to by bean counters, their bottom line was greatness.

These games were classics condemned to cult status.

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Veil of Darkness



IBM 286+color VGA



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THE JURY

This month the jurors sat in judgment of **King's Quest VI** for computer and **Joe Montana 3: NFL Sports Talk Football** for video game play. These are two exceptionally strong games, and the jurors came in with tough verdicts.

But the opinions weren't all unanimous; the reviews varied, especially in the video game contest.

The two winners each earned a free game from **EG**. Here's a reminder: All writers should indicate on their reviews the free game they'd like to receive.

The next **Jury** contest is for one of the newest and most exciting games of this year, **Sonic 2**. The whole staff of **EG** is eager to see what the jurors have to say!

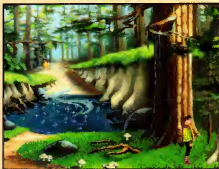
King's Quest VI

Sierra
MS-DOS

Winning Review
by Jonah Jackson

The 3-D graphic adventure format—an industry staple with more quantity than quality of late—receives its due once more from the genre's creator, Roberta Williams. The simple but engrossing plot, stunning artwork (including a stylish interpretation of Hades), several cutaway video sequences and a full length love song are just a few of the perks to this eminently playable game.

You are once again a member of the family with the worst luck since Job's.



King's Quest VI provides gamers with multiple ways of winning the game.



Prince Alexander will have to pass many tests in this large adventure.

This time you are Alexander, son of the erstwhile adventurer, King Graham. Lovesick for the princess with whom you were imprisoned in the previous **King's Quest**, you set off to the mysterious Green Isles in search of the lovely Cassima. One short shipwreck later, you find yourself at her doorstep on the Green Isle itself.

It seems that during Cassima's imprisonment, her parents passed away and the vizier (why do kings always hire these cretins?) has taken over.

As you speak with the townspeople and explore the islands, it becomes clear that even finding your love will require a little help. However, with impressive sound and graphics and a simple but comprehensive interface, you're sure to enjoy many hours of pleasant puzzle solving.

First Runner-Up Review
by Evan Karp

In **King's Quest VI**, Prince Alexander has travelled to the Land of the Green Isles to find and marry his true love, Princess Cassima.

When he finally gets there, after losing his ship and crew in a terrible storm, he can't even get into the castle to see her!

But this is a **King's Quest** game, so you know you're going to have to help Prince Alexander to get to Princess Cassima, and every good player will do whatever it takes to accomplish this.

In the game, you'll do everything from fighting a minotaur and fooling some gnomes to saving a princess. If you want, you can visit the Lord of the Dead and save Cassima's parents.

The graphics are some of the best ever seen in a computer game, especially the screen with the Lord of the Dead. The sound is awesome too, with a lengthy and inviting soundtrack.

The best thing about the game, at least in my opinion, are the multiple endings. The amount of points you have determine the ending you get.

Have fun!

Joe Montana 3: NFL Sports Talk Football

Sega
Genesis

Winning Review
by Mike Fetterly

Sega has yet again produced a sports cart that is great to look at, with play mechanics leaving much to be desired. With **Joe Montana 3**, Sega has thrown a ton of bells and whistles into a game that was just screaming for improved playability. The play mechanics of this cart are simply too difficult.

There are two techniques that can be used for the passing game (the cart's major weakness), both of which are far inferior to that used in all three **John Madden** titles. You can use either a cursor or player-select arrow to direct your passes. The cursor is poor because 1) it makes long passes difficult; receivers are often faster than the cursor, and 2) your quarterback can't scramble while you direct the cursor. The arrow is poor because it alerts your opponent to the intended receiver. The voice is amusing for the first few games, but it still isn't realistic enough.

As mentioned, the graphics are excellent, and the game is rather overwhelming at first. But when you realize just how poor this game plays, you'll find yourself wishing you bought **Madden '93** instead.



The third installment of the Sports Talk Football series has smooth graphics.

First Runner Up Review by Todd Hargosh

"Montana back to pass...throws it...PAY-DAY!! The crowd goes wild!" This is one of the multiple quotes used in **Joe Montana 3** for the Genesis.

Being the first 12-Meg cart out for the Genesis, **NFL Sports Talk Football** is a strong competitor to the already strong **John Madden Football** series. This cart features all 28 teams of the National Football League with some of their best plays. All of the players run, spin, dive, and hurdle with unbelievable realism. The play selection is also more detailed. The gamer is allowed to not only select the play, but also what set of players to use, such as more running backs than wide receivers, and the option to have the QB start from the shotgun.

However, the best feature is the upgraded Sports Talk 2.0. While some of the quotes were used in **Montana 2**, many new quotes were added to describe the weather, the action, and even the formation of the plays. This feature helps to make this an enjoyable cart. Overall, with the more advanced Sports Talk feature and the multiple field views, **Montana 3** is a definite competitor against **Madden '93** for the best Genesis football cart of '92.

Second Runner Up Review by Tony Bueno

Sega's latest sports title in their **Joe Montana Sports Talk** series has arrived. **NFL Sports Talk '93 Starring Joe Montana** utilizes 12-Meg of memory, making it the largest football cartridge on the Genesis to date.

At your disposal are all 28 NFL teams from both conferences and a plethora of playbook options. Configurations at the beginning of the game allow you to choose exhibition or league play and have 20, 40 or 60 minutes games.

Game play is quite enjoyable with the wide variety of options you are presented with. I like being able to play any team

against themselves; however it can be somewhat confusing at times. Other than that, there are no major complaints.

Voice commentaries throughout the entire contest enhance the realism of the game, as do digitized photos of the referee, coaches, crowds, and taunting players. All of these additions make for an entertaining experience.

Sega has once again created a very intense gridiron action game, and while **NFL Sports Talk Football '93** may not be the absolute epitome of football simulations on the Genesis, it is definitely worth a look.

Honorable Mention Review By John H. Brown

If guiding an NFL team through a grueling 16 game season, post season playoffs, and finally to the Super Bowl has been one of your fantasies, then Sega's 12-Meg Genesis superstar is the game for you.

The graphics and sound for this cart are All-Pro; players' movements are life-like and when you blitz the opposing QB, you can actually knock him on his butt. The play-by-play announcing is very well done and adds extra realism to the overall game play.

NFL Sports Talk Football '93 has more options than the Wishbone T; all the standard selections are present: stadium, weather, one-player vs. CPU, 2 players head-to-head or cooperatively, to name a few. There are also some original features such as a passing cursor, four different field views, and zoom view. The play calling options are quite realistic and manageable.



Players can choose from a wide variety of offensive and defensive formations.

The best thing about **NFL '93** is the league play feature. Choose any of the 28 pro teams, then play well in the 16 game season to earn a playoff berth and a shot at the Super Bowl. Sega's commitment to realism makes **NFL '93** a winner. Touchdown Sega!

Second Honorable Mention Review by Clint Nolen

I rented **Joe Montana Sports Talk Football** and found it most enjoyable in control, graphics and fun. The control was excellent. The play-by-play announcements made the action unreal. The announcer talked like a computer, but it was still a very fun game. I give the sound an 85.

With 12-Megs of graphics it could mean trouble for the SNES system without a good sports return. The challenge is mind-bending. This game demands close attention and lightning reflexes. When picking the play, executing the play successfully, and making sure not to get sacked, the player must be careful not to be swept up in the incredible sound and graphics.

Join the Jury

Review a game in EG's monthly contest!

Each month, **Electronic Games'** critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. Now, our unique monthly contest lets you strut your stuff. We'll pick a video cart each month, and challenge gamers to review it. Then, in "The Jury," **EG** will print the best ones—and give free software to the winner.

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the nominated game.
2. Entrants can submit only **one** review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's best review, as determined by **EG** editors, earns the writer the currently available video or computer game of his or her choice (sorry, no Neo-Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

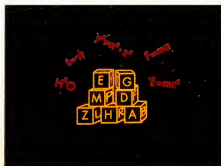
Game for Contest #7:

Sonic 2/Sega (video game for Genesis)

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PLAYING IT SMART

Learning the Fun Way

by Joyce Worley

There is a body of information that is (hopefully) shared by us all. Everyone is expected to know fundamental mathematics, geography and history. These, and the other touchstones of education drilled into us during the grammar school years, give us a sense of social continuity, and the common threads that bind us together through shared knowledge. Yet no lessons are as difficult as these first ones.

Games can help make them easier. This month's crop of edutainments focuses on serious learning made more pleasant through the medium of entertainment software.

Quarky & Quaysoo's **Turbo Science** (Sierra/MS-DOS) was designed and developed by Jeff Tunnell, head of the Dynamix group, and that's why it's so spectacular. The handsome graphics make this one of the most compelling learning experiences any science student could ever enjoy.

Either Quarky or Quaysoo competes against a team of computer characters in a race through 20 checkpoints on the

game map by correctly answering science questions. Difficulty settings make it appropriate for learners aged 9-14, and each checkpoint represents a different kind of science.

Icons offer a choice of travel modes; the faster ones cost money, which is earned by correct answers.

Answers to the questions, which are multiple choices in text or with highlighted answer boxes, are researched either by looking in the research book at the page number helpfully provided by the program, or by using the toolbox. This contains a scale, thermometer, light meter, sound meter, volume beaker, voltage meter and ruler, and measurements are shown in either English or Metric systems. A typical question, for example, may be, "Which on-screen item or person is making the least noise?" Several on-screen items are boxed, and by using the sound meter, the learner easily finds the correct answer.

Sounds and graphics are delightful. The map is an angled overhead view of a charming city, and a click on each area brings up an animated close-up of that part of town. Clicks on each object on the close-up screen produces explanations and some animations.

There's never been a better science tutor. It's so easy to use, even adults will want to play.

Operation U.S. Presidents (Tanager/MS-DOS) is the second in **The Secret Codes of C.Y.P.H.E.R.**

series. As in the first, the plot thickens around important confidential messages to locate, assemble and decipher.

Contacts are located through clues which direct the messenger to meetings with other agents, in order to assemble the document.

The litany of American presidents is imparted through this pleasant device. The clues are, essentially, historical trivia. To research answers, the Presidents Gallery contains a portrait of each president, the map of the U.S. as it appeared



Use your knowledge of U.S. history to solve puzzles and decode messages.

during his era, and a quotation. Further data is in the FunCyclopedia, including terms, first ladies, party affiliation, and more.

For most kids, the fun starts when the message is complete and decoding begins. The player chooses English, American Sign Language, Braille, Morse Code, Semaphore, or Greek.

The graphics aren't flashy; they look more like coloring book pictures than top-class computer art. Yet the program is rich. There's a large databank of information about our nation's leaders, and the game itself is quite challenging. Four skill settings make the questions appropriate for young learners (age 8) through adult history enthusiasts. The deciphering is sure to keep young sleuths coming back to try again, and while doing so, learning a great deal of American history.

Both of these programs have much to offer to students of any age. With every play session, knowledge will increase.



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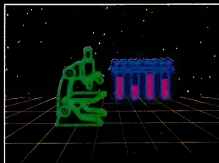
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Aladdin: A Genie In Every Box?

by Ed Dille

The Aladdin Deck Enhancer Camera, in association with Codemasters \$39.95 (packaged with one game)

8 Bit is dead!

No, these are not the ravings of doom-sayers who seek to offend the millions of Nintendo owners. Rather, it is a consensus of opinion among industry attendees at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Software developers are abandoning 8-Bit architecture en masse, which equates to the well-running dry when it comes to new titles.



The Aladdin Deck Enhancer comes with the exciting and colorful game, Dizzy.

Several factors other than the superiority of 16-Bit games are influencing the gamemakers' decisions to cease supporting such a massive audience. First, production costs for 8-Bit cartridges are roughly equivalent to those for 16-Bit car-

tridges, which leads to similar retail pricing: approximately \$50 a copy. Second, it is difficult to justify this price to consumers when the console itself has dropped under the \$100 price point.

Finally, the few remaining new releases are highly sophisticated, to provide the appearance of competition with more capable platforms, which means that each cartridge is packed with extra memory chips. Consequently, as long as each cartridge requires that hardware redundancy, it is impossible for developers to lower the price to more acceptable levels for consumers.

All of these reasons, no matter how logical they sound, might still prove premature due to the unexpected appearance-

ance of Camerica's Aladdin Deck Enhancer.

Developed in conjunction with Codemasters, a group with a reputation for squeezing every drop out of the hardware orange, the Aladdin is more than an enhancement to the Nintendo control deck. It is another system that uses the installed NES base in conjunction with a 64k memory upgrade and a proprietary graphics chip.

The unit is shaped like a "U," the base of which plugs directly into the NES control deck. Inside the "U," the player inserts any Aladdin portable cartridge into a connector. The assembled unit does not interface with or enhance the actual NES hardware, rather it uses it as a conduit to get the game on screen.

The actual manipulation of the game cartridge occurs within the



Aladdin Deck Enhancer, as code passes from the game cartridge into the reusable memory buffer.

Families are faced with a dwindling supply of conventional NES cartridges, and balk at the prohibitive price tags. These folks will gain most enjoyment from the Aladdin.

The buffer can process code blocks for games that have as much as 8 megabytes of code on the cartridge itself. Further, the graphics chip is capable of processing and rotating data at roughly twice the speed of the Nintendo MMC chip. The result of the combined compression and memory management improvements is the ability to animate larger sprites more rapidly and create smoother scrolling routines than ever before on the 8-Bit platform.

Camarcia promises that putting memory extensions in the unit, as opposed to duplicating ROM chips for every cartridge produced, will keep the price for individual titles under \$20.

straw and a bucket of water. To escape the cave he must place the straw against the door, light it on fire with the match, burn the door down and then extinguish the fire with the bucket of water. Logic puzzles like this are scattered throughout the game. They set it apart from a straight dexterity contest.

Once free,

Dizzy sets out to find his missing girlfriend, Dazey. Along the way he encounters other inhabitants of the

land, like Dozey, who does nothing but sleep the day away, and similar other cute characters. Dizzy interacts with them

through pre-scripted cartoon balloons, which are sometimes difficult to read. Unfortunately, one of the less appealing aspects of the product is the choice of typeface, which strains the eyes.

The play environment is very similar to Mario or Bunk games, with each area

Great, but what quality of games may be had for that price? Certainly, a Pong update wouldn't bring \$2, let alone \$20.

The answer to that question is: better than you'd expect. Although none of the titles previewed were particularly innovative, being mostly Mario/Sonic type scrollers and shooters, all of the titles featured superior 8-Bit graphics, bright color schemes and flawless movement.

The Aladdin Deck Enhancer comes with one compact game, entitled Dizzy the Adventurer. Dizzy bears a strong resemblance to Humpty Dumpty were it not for the Indiana Jones hat cocked rakishly on his head.

Dizzy begins the game trapped in an underground cave with a match, a pile of



several screens high and replete with hidden Easter eggs that aid the player.

Dizzy begins with three lives and replenishes himself by eating food items scattered throughout the landscape. He also collects stars to complete each level, again very similar to the Mario products. He dies in any number of ways, like falling into the water with a cute splash, but the design is decidedly non-violent.

Is there a Genie in every box? It depends entirely on the expectations of the player. Aladdin doesn't break any industry standards in terms of graphics, and it certainly won't improve 8-Bit sound routines, which are always dismal.

But it does accomplish some magic of a different sort. Of the millions of NES consoles on the street, many of them are in households with children of the specific age group targeted, 6-10 years old. These families are faced with a dwindling supply of conventional NES cartridges, and they also probably balk at the prohibitive price tags. These are the families that will gain most from the Aladdin. The new device can exploit a very volatile market at exactly the proper time. Many parents are not thrilled with the idea of having to purchase a new video game system every few years just so that their kids will be able to "keep up with the Joneses."

So what is the magic in every box? Simply put, it is the design vision to come up with a product to exploit a genuine need at exactly the right time. The Aladdin Deck Enhancer does this, and does it successfully with a product that performs well and adds expandability. It is truly a win-win situation for all concerned and that, whenever and wherever it occurs, is the best form of magic!



Player control is taken to a new height when using the Aladdin Deck Enhancer.

Gaming On-Line

For Gamers Only

by Ed Dille

MPG (Multi-Player Gaming) Net
1200/2400/9600 baud
\$4.00 per hour

Followers of this column probably recognized each of the BBS services covered up to this point. This month's service, the MPG Net, will likely be as strange as its predecessors were familiar. The reason for this lack of exposure is simple; MPG is such a fledgling service that it does not possess its own communications nodes at the present. Players must access the service through one of the CompuServe nodes, but the connection fees are covered in the hourly charge from MPG Net.

MPG Net is only the second BBS devoted exclusively to multi-player gaming, as opposed to catering to business concerns first and the average player second. Also, it is the first service not associated with a software publisher and therefore will not spotlight a single company's games to the exclusion of all others.

It is worth on-line gamers' time to take a look at what MPG Net has to offer, both now and in the near future.

The Kingdom of Drakkar is an overhead perspective fantasy role-playing game in which the player controls individual charac-

ter in one of the following professions: fighter, paladin, martial artist, mentalist, healer, barbarian or thief. Skill attributes are tied to these professions and the player gains levels through exploration and combat.

The interface is mouse-driven and the graphics are simplistic in that the player-character remains in the center of the screen and the entire screen redraws after each movement. Drakkar does not have the level of refinement offered by TSN's **Yserbius** game, but players will find it a significant step above shareware-based dungeon adventures. Animation and sound improvements are promised in the second quarter of this year.

Star Cruiser is a fast paced 3-D space combat game that is the first stage of development for an eventual full adaptation of Game Designer Workshop's popular board game, **2300 AD**. The second phase will incorporate the mercantile aspects of the original product and should be available later this year. The final revision will incorporate all remaining role-playing features of the original rules and will place players in a **Traveller**-like universe with virtually unlimited courses of action to choose from.

Operation Market Garden provides two players head-to-head competition *vice* true multi-player involvement. Slated for availability early in 1993, this classic

hex-based wargame focuses on the largest airborne operation in history, the push on Arnheim during WWII. Non-history buffs may have some familiarity with the battle through the Hollywood adaptation, *A Bridge Too Far*.

Finally, there is MPG Net's version of Mayfair Games' award winning board game, **Empire Builder**. Up to six players race against one another building competing railroads across North America.



Operation Market Garden reenacts the largest air assault in military history.

Cities must be connected, bridges and tunnels built, and the game requires players to manage a fairly diverse commodities mix to be successful. Again, don't expect **Railroad Tycoon** or **A-Train** from the very beginning, and you won't be disappointed. The greatest advantage **Empire Builder** has over those products is player interaction.

MPG Net has a long way to go before it can hope to compete with the larger services on any semblance of equal footing, but it appears to be taking some appropriate first steps. The board game licenses chosen for development have solid products in their medium. Further, the officials on the net seem responsive to user feedback, which is critical to the refinement process of any system.

EG applauds MPG's efforts and hopes to see parallel developments by other companies. The end result, more of these systems, can only be an open, competitive marketplace in which the real winners are the players themselves.





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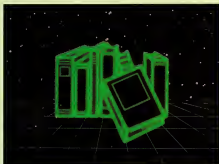
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The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past Game Secrets

Zach Meston, Prima Publishing,
244 pages (softbound, \$9.99)

A categorical approach to hints and hundreds of illustrations make this a useful overview of Link's quests on behalf of Zelda and the land of Hyrule. While providing straightforward information on locations and foes, and instruction as to what to do, Meston's solo effort (previous titles were co-authored with Rusef DeMaria) is lightened by agreeable humor (some sourpusses might call it sophomoric), and an obvious delight in the *Zelda* series.

Most of the book is devoted to detailing the 16-Bit SNES game specified in the title, but two final chapters, reprinted from Prima's *Nintendo Games Secrets* series, offer substantial help with the earlier 8-Bit *Zelda* titles, *The Legend of Zelda* and *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link*.

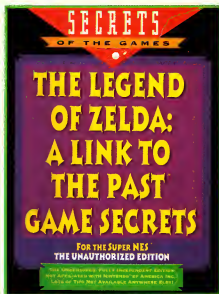
The standard pattern of many hint books is to begin with a brief story background, with sketches of objects and characters. Then the bulk of the text is composed of a narrative walk-through with details of how to defeat lesser enemies and bosses, solve puzzles and escape traps. It is frequently difficult to avoid getting too much information at once, unless some of the data is coded or otherwise hidden or disguised.

Meston skips the storyline, which is thoroughly covered in the game's documentation, and goes straight to the game play. His approach is to devote separate chapters to different game elements, with a much less detailed walk-through toward the last. As he wryly puts it, it has "a sadistic twist: it tells you what to do, but not how to do it." For the hows, other chapters must be consulted.

These chapters are about bosses and how to beat them; dungeons with maps and how to negotiate them; Fairies and

where to find them; heart containers and how to collect all their pieces; items and how to acquire and use them; and, finally, locations, with map coordinates, where interesting things may be done or found.

A last chapter, after the walk-through (and before the 8-Bit chapters), is appro-



Discover many new tips and tricks to
help Link conquer his many quests!

priately called "Weird, Wild Stuff," with notes about some amusing and peculiar routines the player might or might not discover independently. They won't necessarily help in getting on with Link's heroic endeavors, but do help to round out the amazingly detailed world in which Link and the player find themselves.

—Ross Chamberlain

A-Train: The Official Strategy Guide

Nick Dargahi, Prima Publishing Co.
354 pages (softbound, \$18.95)

A-Train is unappreciated. It has not received the fanfare of either *SimCity* or

Railroad Tycoon, though it surpasses both in terms of play value. The economic model of *A-Train*, though faithful to the basic precepts of supply and demand, is complex enough to warrant the thorough treatment it is given here.

The book is divided into three sections. The first elaborates on the game manual and offers a few shortcuts for advanced players, as well as some insight into why certain aspects of the interface were designed as they are.

In the second section, the amount of research invested by the author becomes evident. Titled *Strategies and Secrets*, it includes chapters on the micro and macroeconomic theories behind the *A-Train* model, extensive coverage of railroad design strategies, even a chapter on tips and tricks that covers methods of cheating and Easter eggs within the program. Players will welcome the discussions of algorithms that govern such things as residential development and clearly explain how the player can influence those factors which fall outside his direct control. The author has also summarized much of the data into large, easy-to-read tables. Study of this section will teach players to focus their interests in certain sectors for the highest profit margin, allowing steady progression through the five levels to create a major metropolitan area.

Part III details strategies for the six scenarios included in the original game. Each has explanations of map features which must concern the player, real estate development, and the economic factors which most influence a successful outcome. The optional construction set is addressed in an appendix and provides six examples of specific cities that either pose radically different challenges or act as showpiece screens for the game (as in *Maze* and *Train* cities).

If the manual just doesn't cut it, switch tracks to *A-Train: The Official Strategy Guide*. You will win more and avoid those unsightly derailments.

—Ed Dille



You're so intent on testing the particle accelerator you've invented that you hardly notice the crackling of a not-so-distant electrical storm.

Before you can say SNAP, CRACKLE, POP, a lightning bolt slams through you and your accelerator with deadly accuracy.

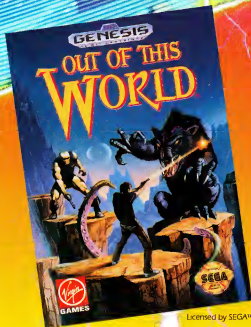
When you finally come to, you have no idea what time or place you're in, but you know you're not safe. Face it you're warped. Unless you want to start calling this place home, you'll need to dodge, outwit and overcome a host of deadly aliens, monster guards and bloodsucking leeches who think you're a delicacy. Now, that shouldn't be too hard for a Whiz Kid like you - right?

Out of This World Features

- Award-winning cinematically styled, rotoscoped animation
- State of the art real-time polygonal graphics
- Continual audio mix of digitized sound effects and musical score



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